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THE

MISCELLANEOUS THEOLOGICAL WORKS

OF

HENRY HAMMOND, D.D.,

ARCHDEACON OF CHICHESTER, AND CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH.

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THE

MISCELLANEOUS THEOLOGICAL WORKS

OF

HENRY HAMMOND, D.D.,

ARCHDEACON OF CHICHESTER AND CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

BY JOHN FELL, D.D.,

DEAN OF CH. CH., AND LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD.

THIRD EDITION.

VOLUME III. pt. 2

CONTAINING SERMONS.

OXFORD:
JOHN HENRY PARKER.
MDCCCL.

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OXFORD :
PRINTED BY I. SHRIMPTON.

THIRTY-ONE SERMONS

PREACHED

ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

BY

HENRY HAMMOND, D.D.,

ARCHDEACON OF CHICHESTER AND CANON OF CHRIST CHURCH.

"How shall they hear, without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?" *Rom.* x. 14, 15.

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." *St. Mark* xvi. 15.

A NEW EDITION.

OXFORD:

JOHN HENRY PARKER.

MDCCCL.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

The arrangement of the Sermons in the present volume follows the order observed in the folio edition of the author's works, and is entirely independent of the time of their delivery or publication. They belong to three different classes. The first ten, as the reader will perceive by the Dedication, were published towards the close of the year 1648. They came out in a small 4to. volume, under circumstances which are explained in the note at page 3, and a second edition was published in 1652, but they were never again reprinted apart from the other Sermons. With regard to the time at which they were written or preached, the present editor can give no further information than what the attentive reader will gather for himself. It may be sufficient to notice that the first and last were prepared for delivery in Advent, 1648, and that the author has himself specified the time at which the seventh, eighth, and ninth were preached, and from the latter being called an Easter Sermon, at St. Mary's in Oxford, A.D. 1644, we may perhaps infer that the other two preached in Lent, 1643, and 1645 respectively, were preached at some other church in that city. But the style of the sermon and the frequent quotations of Greek and Latin phrases sufficiently indicate, that at whatever church they may have

been preached, the audience must have been members of the University. It will be observed that the first and the tenth sermons intended for the King, are more sparing in these quotations from ancient authors in the original languages.

With regard to the remaining five, it can only be inferred from their learned character, that they were intended for a University audience, or at least for an educated congregation. It must not be forgotten that the court was held at Oxford during the year 1644. The royal proclamation convoking the parliament to meet at Oxford on the following 22nd of January, bears date, Dec. 22nd, 1643, and there were there assembled eighty-three members of the upper, and a hundred and sixty-five of the lower house, and they continued to sit till April 16th, when the King adjourned the parliament. A troop of horse had previously been sent under Sir John Byron to Oxford, for its defence.

The next two Sermons are amongst the earliest, if they are not quite the earliest production of Hammond's pen, but they did not appear in print till 1657, and then only as an after-thought, as it appears, and with the view of giving an interest to a volume of additional notes to his Paraphrase and Annotations.

These two sermons are spoken of by his biographer[a] as a specimen of a considerable number which he was from time to time called upon to preach at the visitations of the clergy, and at St. Paul's cross. The latter forms the subject of an interesting anecdote, in which Dr. Potter, the Dean of Worcester, is spoken of as ascribing his worldly prosperity to his having followed the advice there given. The story must be in some respects inaccurately told, as Dr. Potter died at the commencement of 1646, and it is not likely that the last five or six years of his life having been spent however well,

[a] Life, p. xxvi.

would have entitled him to be spoken of as one 'whose memory, for his remarkable charity and all other excellencies befitting his profession and dignity in the Church, is precious.' Besides, his preferments, such as they were, were all conferred upon him some years previously. Of this sermon it only remains to notice, that it was preached at St. Paul's cross, and not as is stated in the title, which is reprinted exactly from the folio, in St. Paul's church.

The remaining nineteen Sermons were not published till after the author's death, 1664, and as they appeared without any advertisement, it is not known who was the editor, or from what materials they were selected. The title-page indicates that they were preached on several occasions, but there is none but internal evidence to shew the period at which, or the audience before whom they were preached. They have all, with the exception of the fourth and the last five, the character of University sermons, and it will be observed that once in the fifth sermon (p. 363) his audience are addressed as 'right honourable.' The reader will find in many of them, expressions which lead to the supposition that they were preached at Oxford, whilst the King's troops were there. With regard to the six which seem exceptions to this, there appears no sufficient ground on which to hazard a conjecture, as to whether they were preached in his parish of Penshurst, before the civil war broke out, or in Worcestershire after he had taken up his residence at Westwood Park.

They were published in a small folio, which is divided into two parts; the first, which contains the twelve Sermons, was printed for Royston, the well-known publisher of the royalist and episcopalian divines. The other nineteen, which now came out for the first time, were printed for Garthwaite, whose publications were also for the most part of the same class. His name appearing in the title-page leads to the sup-

position that Sheldon was the editor, for Garthwaite was Sheldon's publisher. This part also bears the *Imprimatur* of Geo. Stradling, domestic chaplain to Sheldon, then Bishop of London. They were reprinted in 1675, and also in the complete collection of the author's works in 1684.

Nov. 8, 1850. N. P.

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1 Timothy i. 15.

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You know not what spirit you are of.

Of all errors or ignorances there are none so worthy our pains to cure, or caution to prevent, as those that have influence on practice. The prime ingredient in the making up a wise man, saith Aristotle in his Metaphysics[a], is to be well-advised περὶ ὧν ἀπορῆσαι δεῖ πρῶτον, what doubts must first be made, what ignorances earliest provided for: and there is not a more remarkable spring and principle of all the Scripture folly (that is wickedness) among men, than the beginning our Christian course unluckily, with some one or more false infusions, which not only are very hardly ever corrected afterward—like the errors of the first concoction, that are never rectified in the second—but moreover have an inauspicious poisonous propriety in them, turn all into nourishment of the prevailing humour: and then, as the injury of filching some of that corn that was delivered out for seed, hath a peculiar mark of aggravation upon it; is not to be measured in the garner but in the field; not by the quantity of what was stolen, but of what it would probably have proved in the harvest; so the damage that is consequent to this infelicity is never fully aggravated but by putting into the bill against it all the sins of the whole life; yea, and all the damnation that attends it.

Of this kind I must profess to believe the ignorance of the gospel-spirit to be chief, an ignorance that cannot choose but have an influence on every public action of the life. So that as Padre Paolo was designed a handsome office in the

[a] [Aristot. Metaph. B. c. 1.]

senate of Venice, to sit by and observe, and take care *nequid contra pietatem;* so it were to be wished that every man on whom the name of Christ is called had some assistant angel, some *ἐπίτροπος δαίμων*, be it conscience, be it the remembrance of what I now say unto him, to interpose in all, especially the visible undertakings of the life, *nequid contra spiritum Evangelii*, that nothing be ventured on but what is agreeable to the spirit of the gospel. Even disciples themselves may, it seems, run into great inconveniences for want of it; James and John did so in the text; *ignem de cœlo*, "fire from heaven" on all that did not treat them so well as they expected; but Christ turned and reproved them, saying, "You know not what spirit," *οἵου πνεύματος*, "what kind of spirit you are of;" and that with an *ἔμφασις* on *ὑμεῖς*, not *ὑμεῖς ἐστὲ*, but *ἔστε ὑμεῖς*, you "disciples," you "Christians," "You know not what spirit you are of."

In the words it will be very natural to observe these three particulars; 1. That there is a peculiar spirit that Christians are of, *οἵου πνεύματος ὑμεῖς*: 2. That some prime Christians do not know the kind of spirit, *οὐκ οἴδατε*: even so James and John, "You know not," &c.: 3. That this ignorance is apt to betray Christians to unsafe, unjustifiable designs and actions. You that would have fire from heaven, do it upon this one ignorance, "You know not," &c.

I begin first with the first of these, that there is a peculiar spirit that Christians are of; a spirit of the gospel; and that must be considered here, not in an unlimited latitude, but only as it is opposite to the spirit of Elias, *θέλεις ὡς καὶ Ἠλίας*; wilt thou do as he did? It will then be necessary to shew you the peculiarity of the gospel spirit by its opposition to that of Elias, which is manifold; for instance, first, Elias was the great assertor of law; upon which ground Moses and he appear with our Saviour at His transfiguration; so that two things will be observable which make a difference betwixt the legal and the gospel spirit: 1. That some precepts of Christ now clearly (and with weight upon them) delivered by Christ, were, if in substance delivered at all, yet sure not so clearly, and at length, and intelligibly proposed under the law. You have examples in

the fifth of Matthew, in the opposition betwixt the ἐρρήθη ἀρχαίοις, what was said by Moses to the ancients, and the ἐγὼ δὲ ὑμῖν, Christ's sayings to His disciples; which if they be interpreted of Moses' law,—as many of the particulars are evidently taken out of the decalogue, "Thou shalt not kill, commit adultery, perjury,"—Christ's are then clearly superadditions unto Moses'; or if they refer to the Pharisees' glosses, —as some others of them possibly may do,—then do those glosses of those Pharisees—who were none of the loosest nor ignorantest persons among them; but, ἀκριβεστάτη αἵρεσις, for their lives the strictest; and, "they sit in Moses' chair, and whatever they teach, that do," for their learning most considerable—argue the Mosaic precepts not to be so clear and incapable of being misinterpreted; and so still Christ's were additions, if not of the substance, yet of light and lustre, and consequently improvements of the obligation to obedience in us Christians, who enjoy that light, and are precluded those excuses of ignorance that a Jew might be capable of. From whence I may sure conclude, that the *ego autem*, of not retaliating, or revenging of injuries,—for that is sure the meaning of the μὴ ἀντιστῆναι, which we render "resist not evil," —the strict precept of loving, and blessing, and praying for enemies, and the like, is more clearly preceptive, and so more indispensably obligatory to us Christians, than ever it was to the Jews before. And there you have one part of the spirit of the gospel, in opposition to a first notion of the legal spirit. And by it you may conclude, that what Christian soever can indulge himself the enjoyment of that hellish sensuality, that of revenge, or retributing of injuries; nay, that doth not practise that high piece of (but necessary, be it never so rare) perfection of "overcoming evil with good;" and so heap those precious melting coals of love, of blessings, of prayers, those three species of sacred vestal fire upon all enemies' heads; *nescit qualis spiritus*, "he knows not what kind of spirit he is of."

Matt. v. [Acts xxvi. 5.] [Matt. xxiii. 2.] [Matt. v. 39.] [Rom. xii. 20.]

But there is another thing observable of the law, and so of the Judaical legal spirit; to wit, as it concerned the planting the Israelites in Canaan, and that is the command of rooting out the nations; which was a particular case, upon God's sight of the filling up of the measure of the Amorites' sins, [Gen. xv. 16.]

and a judicial sentence of His proceeding upon them; not only revealed to those Israelites, but that with a peremptory command annexed to it, to hate, and kill, and eradicate some of those nations. Which case, because it seldom or never falls out to agree in all circumstances with the case of any other sinful people, cannot lawfully prescribe to the eradicating of any other—though in our opinion never so great—enemies of God, until it appear as demonstrably to us, as it did to those Israelites, that it was the will of God they should be so dealt with; and he that thinks it necessary to shed the blood of every enemy of God, whom his censorious faculty hath found guilty of that charge, that is all for the fire from heaven, though it be upon the Samaritans, the not receivers of Christ, is but as the Rabbis call him sometimes one of the בני דמים and בני אש, "sons of bloods," in the plural number, and "sons of fire;" yea, and like the disciples in my text, *Boanerges*, "sons of thunder," far enough from the soft temper that Christ left them; "Ye know not what kind of spirit ye are of."

[Mark iii. 17.]

In the next place, Elias' spirit was a prophetic spirit, whose dictates were not the issue of discourse and reason, but impulsions from heaven. The prophetic writings were not, saith St. Peter, *ἰδίας ἐπιλύσεως*, (I conceive in an agonistic sense,) of "their own starting," or incitation, as they were moved or prompted by themselves, but, as it follows, *ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἁγίου φερόμενοι*, "as they were carried by the Holy Ghost;" not as they were led, but carried;—"when the Lord speaks, who can but prophesy?" And so likewise are the actions prophetic; many things that are recorded to be done by prophets in Scripture, they proceed from some peculiar incitations of God; I mean not from the ordinary, or extraordinary, general, or special direction or influence of His grace, co-operating with the Word, as in the breast of every regenerate man,—for the spirit of sanctification, and the spirit of prophecy, are very distant things,—but from the extraordinary revelation of God's will, many times against the settled rule of duty—acted and animated not as a living creature, by a soul, but moved as an outward impellent, a sphere by an intelligence, and that frequently into eccentrical and planetary motions; so that they were no further justifiable than that

[2 Pet. i. 20.]

[Amos iii. 8.]

prophetic calling to that particular enterprise will avow. Consequent to which is, that because the prophetic office was not beyond the Apostles' time to continue constantly in the Church, any further than to interpret, and superstruct upon what the canon of the Scripture hath settled among Christians,—Christ and His word in the New Testament being *bath-col*, which the Jews tell us was alone to survive all the other ways of prophecy,—he that shall now pretend to that prophetic spirit, to some vision, to teach what the word of God will not own; to some incitation to do what the New Testament law will not allow of; he that with the late friar in France[b], pretends to ecstatical revelations, with the enthusiasts of the last age[c], and fanatics now with us, to ecstatical motions; that with Mahomet pretends a dialogue with God, when he is in an epileptic fit, sets off the most ghastly diseases, I shall add, most horrid sins, by undertaking more particular acquaintance and commerce with the Spirit of God, a call from God's providence and extraordinary commission from heaven, for those things, which if the New Testament be canonical, are evaporate from hell; and so first "leads captive silly women,"—as Mahomet did his wife, —and then a whole army of Janizaries into a war, to justify and propagate such delusions, and put all to death that will not be their proselytes, is far enough from the gospel spirit that lies visible in the New Testament (*verbum vehiculum spiritus*), and the preaching of the word (*διακονία πνεύματος*), and is not infused by dream or whisper, nor authorized by a melancholy or fanatic fancy; and so *οὐκ οἶδεν οἵου*, "knows not what kind," &c.

[2 Tim. iii. 6.]

[2 Cor. iii. 8.]

In the third place, Elias was the great precedent and example of sharp unjudiciary procedure with malefactors, which [differed] from the common ordinary awards on criminals, in that execution preceded trial, and the malefactor suffered *ἐπ' αὐτοφώρῳ*, without attending the formalities of law.

Of this kind two examples are by Mattathias cited, one of

1 Maccab. ii. [54.]

[b] Pere Barnard.

[c] Copinger or Arthington. [Fanatics in the reign of Q. Elizabeth, the pretended prophets of Hacket who pretended to be our Saviour; see the book entitled "Conspiracie for intended Reformation, a treatise discovering the late designments and courses held for advancement thereof by Edmund Coppinger, William Hacket, and Henry Arthington (out of others' depositions, and their own letters, writings and confessions.) 4to. Lond. 1592. (by Rich. Cosin, LL.D.)"]

[Ex. xxv. 7.] Phinehas, ἐν τῷ ζηλῶσαι ζῆλον, that "zealed a zeal," and, in that, run through Zimri and Cozbi, and so—as the captain once answered for the killing the drowsy sentinel—*reliquit quos invenit*, found them in unclean embraces, and so left them. And the variety of our interpretations in rendering [Ps. cvi. 30.] of that passage in the Psalm, "Then stood up Phinehas and prayed," in the old, and "then stood up Phinehas and executed judgment," in the new translations, may perhaps give some account of that action of his, that upon Phinehas' prayer for God's direction what should be done in that matter, God raised up him in an extraordinary manner to execute judg- [1 Macc. ii. 58.] ment on those offenders. And the other of Elias in the text, [2 Kings i. 10] and he with some addition, ἐν τῷ ζηλῶσαι ζῆλον νόμου, "In zealing the zeal of the law, called fire from heaven upon those that were sent out from Ahaziah, to bring him to him." And this fact of his, by God's answering his call, and the coming down of the fire upon them, was demonstrated to come from God also, as much as the prediction of the king's death, which was confirmed by this means.

It may very probably be guessed by Mattathias' words in that place, that there were no precedents of the zelotic spirit in the Old Testament but those two; for among all the catalogue of examples mentioned to his sons to inflame their zeal to the law, he produceth no other; and it is observable, that though there be practices of this nature mentioned in the [Acts vii. 59; xiv. 5, 19.] story of the New Testament, the stoning of St. Stephen, of St. Paul at Iconium, &c., yet all of them practised by the Jews, and not one that can seem to be blameless, but that of Christ [John ii. 15.] (who sure had extraordinary power) upon the buyers and sellers in the temple; upon which the Apostles remembered [Ps. lxix. 9.] the Psalmist's prophecy, ζῆλος κατέφαγε, the "zeal of God's house" carried him to that act of νέμεσις, of indignation and punishment upon the transgressors. And what mischief was done among the Jews by those of that sect in Josephus[d], that called themselves by the name of zealots, and withal took upon them to be the saviours and preservers of the city, but as it proved, the hasteners and precipitators of the destruction of that kingdom, by casting out and killing the high-priests first, and then the nobles and chief men of the nation,

[d] [Josephus de Bell. Jud., lib. iv. 3. et passim.]

and so embasing and intimidating, and dejecting the hearts of all the people, that all was at length given up to their fury—Josephus, and any of the learned that have conversed with the Jewish writers, will instruct the enquirer. And ever since, no very honourable notion had of ζῆλος in the New Testament; one of the "fruits of the flesh," Gal. v., of the "wisdom that comes not from heaven," Jam. iii., and in the same, πικρὸς ζῆλος, a "bitter zeal," a gall that will embitter all that come near it. The short of it is, the putting any man to death, or inflicting other punishment upon any terms but that of legal, perfectly legal process, is the importance of a zelotic spirit, as I remember in Maimonides[e], "him that curses God in the name of an idol, the קנאים that meet him, kill him," i.e. the zealots—permitted, it seems, if not authorized to do so. And this is the spirit of Elias, that is of all others most evidently reprehended and renounced by Christ. The Samaritans, no very sacred persons, added to their habitual constant guilts at that time to deny common civility of entertainment to Christ Himself; and the disciples asked whether they might not do what Elias had done, "call for fire from heaven" upon them in that case; and Christ tells them that the gospel spirit was of another complexion from that of Elias, καὶ στραφεὶς ἐπετίμησε, turned to them as He did to Peter, when He said, "Get thee behind Me, Satan;" as to so many fiery satanical-spirited men, and checked them for that their furious zeal, with an οὐκ οἴδατε οἵου, κ.τ.λ. The least I can conclude from hence is this, that they that put any to death by any but perfectly legal process, that draw the sword upon any but by the supreme magistrate's command, are far enough from the gospel spirit, whatever precedent they can produce to countenance them. And so if they be really what they pretend, Christians, οὐκ οἴδασι, they are in a prodigious mistake or ignorance; "they know not what spirit they are of."

Gal. v. [20.] Jam. iii. [14, 15.]

[Luke ix. 54.]

[Matt. xvi. 23.]

Yet further it is observable of Elias, that he did execrate and curse, call for judgments from heaven upon men's persons; and that temper of mind in the parallel, you may distribute into two sorts: first, in passing judgments upon men's future estates, the censorious reprobating spirit, which though we find it not in Elias at this time, yet is a consequent of

[e] De Idol., c. 2. [sect. xiii. p. 34. ed. Voss. 1641.]

the prophetic office, and part of the burden received from the Lord, and laid upon those guilty persons concerning whom it hath pleased Almighty God to reveal that secret of His cabinet; but then this rigour cannot, without sin, be pretended to by any else; for in the blackest instances, "charity believes all things," and "hopes all things," and even in this sense, "covers the multitudes of sins." Now this so culpable an insolent humour, rashly to pass a condemning sentence, was discernible in the Pharisees,—"this publican," whose profession and trade is forbidden by that law, and this "people that know not that law, is accursed," —so likewise in the Montanists,—*nos spirituales*, and all others *animales* and *psychici* so in the Romanists (who condemn all but themselves) and in all those generally whose pride and malice conjoined—most directly contrary to the gospel spirit of humility and charity—doth prepare them one, and the other inflame them, to triumph and glut themselves in this spiritual assassinacy, this deepest dye of blood, the murdering of souls; which because they cannot do it really, they endeavour in effigy, anathematize and slaughter them here in this other Calvary, the place for the crucifying of reputations, turning them out of the communion of their charity, though not of bliss; and I am confident reject many whom the angels entertain more hospitably. Another part of this cursing spirit there is, more peculiarly Elias's, that of praying (and so calling) for curses on men's persons; and that being upon the enemies of God, and those appearing to Elias a prophet to be such, might be then lawful to him and others like him—David perhaps, &c., in the Old Testament—but is wholly disliked and renounced by Christ under this state of higher discipline to which Christians are designed by Him in the New. I say, not only for that which concerns our own enemies, for that is clear, "When thine enemy hungereth, feed him;" and somewhat like that in the Old Testament, "When thine enemy's ox," &c.[g]: but I extend it even to the enemies of God Himself, and that I need not do upon other evidence than is afforded

[Luke xviii. 11.] [John vii. 49.]

[e. g. Ps. cix.]

[Rom. xii. 20.]

[f] [Cf. Tertullian. de jejun. ad init.]

[g] ["If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him." Exod. xxiii. 4, 5.]

from the text; the Samaritans were enemies of Christ Himself and were barbarous and inhuman to His person, and they must not be cursed by disciples. And he that can now curse even wicked men, who are more distantly the enemies of God, can call for—I say not discomfiture upon their devices, for that is charity to them, to keep them from being such unhappy creatures as they would be, contrivers of so much mischief to the world; but—plagues and ruin upon their persons,—which is absolutely the voice of revenge, that sulphur-vapour of hell;—he that delighteth in the misery of any part of God's image,—and so usurps upon that wretched quality of which we had thought the devil had gotten the monopoly—that of ἐπιχαιρεκακία, joying in the brother's misery,—but now see with horror is got loose out of that pit to rave among us;—he that would mischief, if it were in his power, and, now it is not, by unprofitable wishes of execration shews his good-will toward it, is quite contrary to the gospel spirit, and so οὐκ οἶδε οἷον, "he knows not," &c.

Lastly, Elias was not only rapt to heaven, but moved on earth in a fiery chariot, ζηλώσας ζῆλον, saith the author of the book of Maccabees; his zeal had fire and fire again,—ζηλόω comes from ζέω, an excessive fervency,—and agreeable to his temper is his appetite; he desires nothing but fire upon his adversaries, calls for fire, and fire, and fire, as you may see it in the story. And the gospel spirit is directly contrary to this, an allaying, quenching spirit, a gentle lambent flame, that sits on the Apostles' heads to enlighten and adorn; by its vital warmth expelling partial hectic heats, and burning feverish distempers, that spiritual πύρωσις mentioned in the gospel; and putting in the place, a cool, sedate, and equable temper, "to have peace with all men," and chiefly with ourselves, φιλοτιμεῖσθαι ἡσυχάζειν,—an admirable phrase in St. Paul,—to use as much diligence to restore the earth to peace again as all the wind, or air, or perhaps fire in its bowels (I mean, ambitious, contentious men) do to set it a shaking; and he that will not contribute his utmost to quench those flames, that will not joyfully do any thing that may not directly or by consequence include sin, toward the extinguishing a fire thus miserably gotten into the veins and bowels of a calamitous kingdom, is far enough

[1 Macc. ii. 54.]

[1 Thess. iv. 11.]

from the gospel spirit, and so οὐκ οἶδε οἵου, "he knows not," &c.

I shall not clearly give you the gospel spirit unless I proceed from its opposition to Elias' act, to that other, the opposition to the motion of those disciples, considered in the particular circumstances. The case stood thus; Christ was going up to Jerusalem, thereupon the Samaritans receive Him not; the disciples will have fire from heaven upon those Samaritans. Jerusalem was at that time the only proper place of God's worship, and may note to us as an emblem, the true established Protestant religion of this kingdom. The Samaritans were great enemies to this, enemies to Jerusalem; being, first, heretics in religion, took in the Assyrian idols into the worship of the true God; "they feared the Lord, and served their own gods," as it is in the story, and continued their wont when they turned Christians, make up the first sort of heretics in Epiphanius' catalogue[h]. Secondly, they were schismatics in an eminent manner, set up a new separation by themselves on mount Gerizim. And further yet, in the third place, pretended to the only purity and antiquity; they lived where Jacob once lived; and therefore, though Assyrians by extraction, they boast they are Jacob's seed, and pretend more antiquity for that schism of theirs, because Jacob once worshipped in that mountain, than they think can be shewed for the temple at Jerusalem, which was but in Solomon's time of a later structure. Just as they which pretended, though never so falsely, that they were of Christ, have still despised and separated from all others as novelists, which walked in the Apostles' steps and practices; and so Samaritans under guilts enough; first, haters of Jerusalem; secondly, heretics; thirdly, separatists; fourthly, pretenders—though without all reason—to the first antiquity, and so arrogant hypocrites too; and fifthly, beyond all, prodigious, but still confident, disputers; and yet, sixthly, one higher step than all these, contemners and haters of all, even of Christ Himself, on this only quarrel, because He was a friend to Jerusalem, and looked as if He were a going thither, as if He had some favour to the established religion of the land. I wish this

[2 Kings xviii. 33.]

[h] [S. Epiphanius cont. Hæreses, lib. i. p. 24.]

passage did not hitherto parallel itself; but seeing it doth too illustriously to be denied or disguised, I shall imagine that that which follows may do so too.

All this together was temptation to two honest disciples, to think fire from heaven a but reasonable reward for such Samaritans; and, having flesh and blood about them, compounded with piety, you will not much wonder at them that they were wrought on by the temptation; and yet this very thought of theirs, the *Κύριε θέλεις*, is presently checked by Christ, as being against the gospel spirit; "you know not what spirit you are of." Haters of the Church, heretics, schismatics, hypocrites, irrational pretenders, enemies, contumelious even to Christ Himself, must not presently be assigned the devil's portion, the *ἐσφράγισται ταμιεῖα*, may be yet capable of some mercy, some humanity, not instantly devoted to be sacrifices to our fury. The gospel spirit will have thoughts of peace, of reconcileableness toward them. And let me beseech God first, and then you, right honourable: God, that He endue and inspire your hearts with this piece of the gospel spirit, so seasonable to your present consultations; and you, that you would not reject my prayers to God, but open your hearts to receive the return of them, and not imitate even the disciples of Christ, in that they are Boanerges; but stay till the cool of the day, till you have them in a calmer temper, when Christ's word and doctrine hath stilled those billows, as once He did the other tempestuous element. It was Antoninus'[1] way to be revenged on his enemies, *μὴ ἐξομοιοῦσθαι*, not to imitate them, whatever he did. And this was but an essay or obscure shadow of the Christian magnanimity, that goes for poverty of spirit in the world, but proceeding from the right principle of unshaken patience, of constant unmoveable meekness, of design to be like our royal Master-sufferer. "Father, forgive them" that crucify Me; and "Go and preach" the doctrine of the kingdom to them, after they have crucified Me. And you know all we ministers ever since are but ambassadors of Christ, to ingrate crucifying enemies, "praying them in Christ's name and stead that they would be reconciled," that they

[Luke xxii. 34; xxiv. 47.]

[2 Cor. v. 20.]

[1] [*Ἄριστος τρόπος τοῦ ἀμύνεσθαι, τὸ μὴ ἐξομοιοῦσθαι.*—Antoninus ad Seipsum, lib. vi. § 6.]

that have done the wrong will vouchsafe to be friends. What is it but that eminent piece of gospel spirit which they that can be persuaded to part with, for all the sweetness that thirst of revenge can promise or pretend to bring in unto them, are unhappily ignorant of the richest jewel that ever came within their reach. "They know not," &c.

I have as yet given you the gospel spirit in one colour or notion, that of its opposition to Elias first, and then to the Boanerges. It will be necessary to add somewhat of the positive consideration of it, though that must be fetched from other Scriptures. And this will be but necessary to this text, because that which is here mentioned is the *πνεῦμα*, spirit in the extent, not only that one part of it that respected the present action; where, though any one eminent defect—that particularly wherein those disciples offended—were destructive to the gospel spirit, *malum ex quolibet defectu*, yet all the several branches of it are required to integrate or make up the gospel spirit, *bonum ex essentia integra*. And what these branches are I cannot better direct you, than by putting you in mind of these few severals. First, Christ's badge or cognizance—"By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if you love one another"—not of one opinion, but of love. Add *nunquam læti sitis*[j], *&c.*, as Jews rend garments at blasphemy, so we at uncharitableness. Secondly, Christ's legacy, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you." Thirdly, Christ's copy, "Learn of Me;" what is beyond all His other perfections, "I am meek." Fourthly, the nature of that "wisdom which cometh from above; first pure, then peaceable." Fifthly, the quality of the fruits of the spirit in St. Paul; "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness," &c. Sixthly, the gallantry of meekness in St. Peter, "Ornament of a meek and quiet spirit." Seventhly, Titus' charge that all Christians are to be put in mind of, "To be subject to principalities, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers (*ἄμαχοι*, no fighters), but gentle, shewing all meekness to all men"—things that it seems nothing but

[John xiii. 35.]
[John xiv. 27.]
[Matt. xi. 29.]
James iii. [17.]
[Gal. v. 22.]
[1 Pet. iii. 4.]
Tit. iii. 1, 2.

j Nazar. Sosp. [So in printed editions by mistake for Gosp. The passage is quoted from the Nazarene Gospel by St. Jerome, Comment. in Ephes. lib. iii. (in cap. v. 4.) Op., tom. vii. p. 641. B. See above, Serm. ii. p. 37.]

Christianity could infuse—"For we ourselves were sometimes fools, disobedient, &c. . . . but after the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared," then room for this spirit. [Tit. iii. 3.]

I cannot give you a readier landscape to present them all to your view together than that excellent sermon of Christ upon the mount, that *ἄκρον καὶ κορυφὴ φιλοσοφίας*, as Chrysostom calls it, "that top pitch of divine philosophy," worthy to be imprinted in every man's heart; and of which he that hath not been a pondering student, and resolved to regulate his practice by it, as much as his faith by the Apostles' creed; yea, and to lay down his life a martyr of that doctrine—though he hath all faith, I cannot promise myself much of his Christianity. If you will have the brachygraphy of that, the manual picture that may be sure, either in words or sense, never to depart from your bosom, but remain your constant phylactery or preservative from the danger of all ungodly spirits, then take the beatitudes in the front of it; and among them—that I may, if it be possible, bring the whole Iliads into a nutshell—those that import immediately our duty towards men; for in that the gospel spirit especially consists, increasing our love to brethren, whose flesh Christ now assumed, and in whose interests He hath a most immediate concern. And if you mark, in the chapter following, all the improvements mentioned, except only that of swearing, belong to the commands of the second table. And then the integral parts of this gospel spirit will be these four constantly, humility, meekness, mercifulness, peaceableness, and if need be, suffering too. Every of these four brought in to us with a checker or lay of duty towards God, of mourning betwixt humility and meekness; hungering and thirsting after righteousness, betwixt meekness and mercifulness; purity of heart betwixt mercifulness and peaceableness; and persecution and reproaches, and *πᾶν πονηρὸν ῥῆμα*, every Rabshakeh topic of railing rhetoric vomited out upon us,—blessed persecution, blessed reproaches, when our holding to Christ is that which brings them all upon us,—the consummation and crown of all. [See Matt. v. 3—12.]

Having but named you these severals, humility, meekness, mercifulness, peaceableness, and, if need be, patience of all

stripes, both of hand and tongue; the sparkling gems in this jewel, blessed ingredients in this gospel spirit, you will certainly resolve it full time for me to descend to my second particular at first proposed, that some disciples there were, some prime professors do not know the kind of that spirit, *οὐκ οἴδατε οἵου*, "You know not what kind of spirit you are of."

James and John it appears were such disciples, and that after they had been for some competent time followers and auditors of His sermons; so far an easier thing it is to leave their worldly condition and follow Christ, than to leave their carnal prejudices and ignorances and obey Him; especially those that had such hold in their passions,—as revenge, they say, is the pleasingest piece of carnality in the heap,—cheaper to hear His gospel sermons than to practise them. And you will less wonder at these two when you see that St. Peter himself, after a longer space of proficiency in that school, even at the time of Christ's attachment, had not yet put off that ignorance, *ὁ θερμὸς Πέτρος*, say the fathers [k], Peter was of an hot constitution, and Christ's doctrine had not yet got down deep enough into his heart to allay or cool him. *Nondum concipiens in se Evangelicam patientiam illam traditam sibi a Christo, &c.*, saith Origen [l]; that gospel patience and peaceableness that Christ had commended to him, he had not, it seems, yet received into an honest heart, and so he makes no scruple to cut off Malchus' ear when he was provoked to it. [John xviii. 10.] I have heard of a friar that could confess that Malchus signified a king, and yet after made no scruple to acknowledge him in that notion to be the high-priest's servant; and secondly, to justify St. Peter's act and avoid Christ's reprehension, by saying that he was chid, not for doing so much, but for doing no more; not for cutting off his ear, but for not directing the blow better to the cutting off his head. And how far this friar's barbarous divinity hath been justified of late by the writings of some—who will yet persuade us that Christ did not reprehend St. Peter for that act—and by

[k] [e. g. St. Chrysostom; *τί οὖν ὁ Πέτρος ὁ πανταχοῦ θερμὸς καὶ ἀεὶ τῶν ἄλλων προπηδῶν.*—Op., tom. vii. p. 525. D; cf. ibid., p. 524. D.]

[l] [Origen. Tractat. xxxv. in S. Matth. § 101. Op., tom. iii. p. 907 E. Only extant in the Latin.]

the actions of others, I have little joy to represent unto you; God knows I love not to widen breaches; only I am sure the fathers are clear; that though formerly St. Peter were ignorant, and from that ignorance and zeal together, ran into that fury, yet Christ *μεταρρυθμίζων αὐτὸν εἰς εὐαγγελικὴν πολιτείαν*[m], desirous to tune him to that sweet harmonical gospel temper, tells him he must not use the sword,—he having no commission, especially against those that have it, though they use it never so ill,—*κἂν τὸν θεὸν δοκεῖ τις ἐνδικεῖν*, "though it were to avenge even God Himself." And having given you these proofs of this ignorance in three disciples, I think it is possible I might extend it to the rest of them that they were in this particular ignorant too,—as it seems they were in many other things,—till the Holy Ghost came according to promise, "to teach them all things, and to bring to their remembrance,"—to thaw their memories, that the words of Christ, like the voice in Plutarch that had been frozen, might at length become audible; or as Plato's precepts were learned by his scholars when they were young, but never understood till they were men of full age, and tamer passions[n],—I say, to bring to their remembrance whatsoever Christ had in person said unto them. And I wish to God it were uncharitable to charge this ignorance still upon disciples, after so many solemn embassies of the Holy Ghost unto us, to teach us and remember us of this duty. Nay, I wish, that now after He hath varied the way of appearing, after He hath sat upon us in somewhat a more direful shape, not of a dove, but vulture,—tearing even the flesh from us on purpose, that when we have less of that carnal principle left, there might be some heed taken to this gospel spirit,—there were yet some proficiency observable among us, some heavings of the *εὐαγγελικὴ πολιτεία*, that hath so long been a working in the world; I am confident there were no such way of designing a prosperous, flourishing, durable kingdom, as to found its policy upon gospel principles, and maintain it by the gospel spirit. I have authority to think that was the meaning of that prophecy of

[John xiv. 26.]

[m] Theophyl. Comm. in Matth. xxvi. [Op., tom. i. p. 151. B.]

[n] [See Plutarch; "Quomodo quis suos in virtute sentiat profectus," § 7. Op., tom. i. P. i. p. 302. Wyttenb.]

[Isa. iii. 4.] Christ's "turning swords into plough-shares," not that He should actually bring peace, He tells you that it would prove quite contrary, but because the fabric of the gospel is such that would all men live by it, all wars and disquiets would be banished out of the world. It was a madness in Machiavel to think otherwise, and yet the unhappiness of the world that Sir Thomas More's book that designed it thus should be then called Utopia, and that title to this hour remain perfect prophecy, no place to be found where this dove may rest her foot, where this gospel spirit can find reception. No not among disciples themselves, those that profess to adventure their lives to set up Christ's kingdom in its purity; none so void of this knowledge as they. Whether we mean a speculative or practical knowledge of it, few arrived to that height or vacancy of considering whether there be such a spirit or no. Some so in love with nature, that old Pelagian idol, resolve that sufficient to bring them to heaven, if they but allow their brethren what they can claim by that grand character, love of friends, those of the same persuasion, those that have obliged them; they have nature's leave, and so are resolved to have Christ's, to hate, pursue to death whom they can fancy their enemies. And I wish some were but thus of Agrippa's religion, ἐν ὀλίγῳ Χριστιανοὶ, so near being Christians as nature itself would advance them; that gratitude, honour to parents, natural affection, were not become malignant qualities, disclaimed as conscientiously as obedience and justice, and honouring of betters. Others again so devoted to Moses' law, the Old Testament spirit, that whatever they find practised there, they have sufficient authority to transcribe. And it is observable that they which think themselves little concerned in the Old Testament duties,—which have a long time passed for unregenerate morality, that faith hath perfectly outdated,—are yet zealous assertors of the Old Testament spirit, all their pleas for the present resistance fetched from them, yea, and confessed by some that this liberty was hidden by God in the first ages of the Christian Church, but now revealed we cannot hear where, yet, but in the Old Testament, and from thence a whole Psalm, 109th, full of curses against God's enemies and theirs,—and generally

[Gen. viii. 9.]

[Acts xxvi. 28.]

Psalm cix.

those pass for synonymous terms,—the special devotion they are exercised in; and if ever they come within their reach, no more mercy for them than for so many of the seven nations, in rooting out of which a great part of their religion consists. I wish there were not another prodigy also abroad under the name of the Old Testament spirit, the opinion of the necessity of sacrifice, real bloody sacrifice,—even such as was but seldom heard of among Indians and Scythians themselves,—such sacrifices, of which the cannibal Cyclops' feasts may seem to have been but attendants, —furnished with the τομαὶ and μερίδες, that come from such savage altars,—sacrificing of men, of Christians, of protestants as good as any in the world, to expiate for the blood shed by papists in Queen Mary's days; and some prophets ready to avow, that without such sacrifice there is no remission, no averting of judgments from the land. What is this but like the Pharisees, "to build and garnish the sepulchres of the prophets, and say, that if they had lived in their fathers' days, they would never have partaken of the blood of the prophets," and yet go on "to fill up the measure of their fathers?" The very men to whom Christ directs thee, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest," in the present tense, a happy turn, if but the progeny of those murderers, and what can then remain, but the "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate,"—irreversible destruction upon the land. A third sort there is again, that have so confined the gospel to promises, and a fourth, so persuaded that the *Unum necessarium* is to be of right persuasions in religion; i. e. of those that every such man is of,—for he that did not think his own the truest, would sure be of them no longer,—that betwixt those two popular deceits, that of the fiduciary, and this of the solifidian, the gospel spirit is not conceived to consist in doing any thing; and so still those practical graces, humility, meekness, mercifulness, peaceableness, and Christian patience, are very handsomely superseded; that one Moses' rod, called faith, is turned serpent, and hath devoured all these for rods of the magicians; and so still you see men sufficiently armed and fortified against the gospel spirit. All that is now left us, is not to exhort, but weep in secret, not to dispute, but pray for it, that God will at last give us eyes

[Matt. xxiii. 29.]

[ver. 37.]

[ver. 38.]

[Ex. vii. 12.]

to discern this treasure put into our hands by Christ, which would yet, like a whole navy and fleet of plate, be able to recover the fortune and reputation of this bankrupt island, fix this floating Delos, to restore this broken shipwrecked vessel to harbour and safety, this whole kingdom to peace again. Peace! seasonable, instant peace, the only remedy on earth to keep this whole land from being perfect vastation, perfect Afric of nothing but wild and monster; and the gospel spirit that Christ came to preach and exemplify, and plant among men, the only way imaginable to restore that peace. Lord that it might at length break forth among us! the want of it is certainly the author of all the miseries we suffer under; and that brings me to the third and last particular, that this ignorance of the gospel spirit is apt to betray Christians to unsafe, unjustifiable enterprises: you that would have fire from heaven, do it upon this one ignorance, "You know not," &c.

It were too sad, and too long a task, to trace every of our evils home to the original; every of the fiends amongst us to the mansion in the place of darkness peculiar to it. If I should, it would be found too true, what Du Plesse is affirmed to have said to Languet, as the reason why he would not write the story of the civil wars of France, "that if he were careful to observe the causes, and honest to report them, he must hound the fox to a kennel which it was not willing to acknowledge;" drive such an action to the brothel-house, that came speciously and pretendedly out of a church: find that to be in truth the animosity of a rival that took upon it to be the quarrel for religion; or as in Polybius[o] oft, the *πρόφασις* to be a thing very distant from the *αἰτία*, the colour from the cause.

In the mean, it will not be a peculiar mark of odium on the embroilers of this present State and Church, to lay it at their doors, which I am confident never failed to own the like effects in all other Christian states, the ignorance—i. e. in the Scripture phrase, not practising—of those Christian rules which the gospel spirit presents us with.

I might tire you but with the names of those effects that flow constantly from this ignorance, such are, usurping the

[o] [Polybius. Hist., lib. iii. c. 6. § 6; and ibid., c. 7. § 3.]

power that belongs not to us, which humility would certainly disclaim; such, resisting the powers under which we are placed by God, to which meekness would never be provoked; such the judging and censuring men's thoughts and intentions any further than their actions enforce, most unreconcileable with the forgiving part of mercifulness; such the doing any kind of evil, that the greatest or publickest good may come, designing of rapine or blood to the sanctifiedest end, which St. Paul and peaceableness would never endure; such impatience of the cross, shaking a kingdom to get it off from our own shoulders, and put it on other men, diametrally opposite to the suffering and patience of a Christian.

To retire from this common to the enclosure, and to go no further than the text suggests to me, "To call fire from heaven upon Samaritans," is here acknowledged the effect of the *οὐκ οἴδατε*, the want of knowledge, or consideration of the quality of their spirit.

And what may that signify to us? Why, fire, you know, is the emblem of a civil war, which is called a *πύρωσις*, a "combustion," or, being further broken out into flames, a "conflagration;" and I conceive should be so rendered in that place of St. Peter, where we read "the fiery trial." [1 Pet. iv. 12.]

Now fire, you know, belongs most naturally to hell; and therefore when the fire and brimstone came down upon Sodom, the fancy of the fathers calls it *gehennam de cœlo:* and so generally the civil fire, the combustion in a state, its original is from thence too; part of that "wisdom that is not from above." These tares so apt for burning, are sowed by Satan, the enemy-man. From whence come "wars and strivings among you,"—*πόλεμοι καὶ μάχαι*, wars of all sizes,—"are they not from your lusts, that war in your flesh?" saith St. James. The lusts from the flesh, but the war from hell, the devil, the *spiritus sufflans* that sets them a warring. Believe it, they would not be able to do it in this manner, prove such fiery *boutefeus*, if they were not inflamed from beneath, if they were not set on fire by hell. And therefore to call fire from heaven, to entitle God or heaven to that fire, is to do both of them great injury; nay, though it be on Samaritans, that are not so friendly to Christ as might be expected. And so to call fire from heaven upon Samaritans, [Jam. iii. 15.] [Jam. iv. 1.]

is (by accommodation at least) to pretend God, or heaven, or religion, for the cause of war, which of all things hath least to do it, if the gospel spirit may have leave to be considered. Indeed, very few kinds of war there are that will be justified by gospel principles. It was truly said, (though by a rough soldier,) "that if the Lord of Hosts were permitted to sit in the council of war, there would soon be a cessation of arms, and disbanding of armies." Though that all war is not unlawful, will appear by John Baptist's address to the soldiers, who gave rules to regulate their militia, but did not disband them; and the example of the convert centurion, a centurion still after his conversion: where yet this still remains as an infallible resolution, that wars are to be used like the *regia medicamenta*, never but when the physician sees there is no other means available; never upon the wantonness of the patient, but command of the physician, and never but when peace appears to be impossible; for if it be possible, the precept is of force, "Follow peace with all men." And then to shed the blood of Christians, when blood may be spared, what an hideous thing it is you may guess by that emperor, that having beheaded a Christian, was by the sight of a fish's head that came to his table so astonished, fancying that it was the head of that slaughtered Christian gaping on him, that he scarce recovered to his wits; or of that poor penitent David in his pathetic expression, "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O Lord." A wonderful deliverance, it seems, to get clear from that. And what an ocean of fishes' heads may appear one day gaping on some men I have no joy to tell: "Deliver us from blood-guiltiness, O God."

[Luke iii. 4.]

[Heb. xii. 14.]

[Ps. li. 14.]

I have done with my third particular also, and have now no more to importune you with, but my requests to you, and to heaven for you, that the time past of all our lives be sufficient to have spent in the will of the Gentiles, after the dictates of that heathen spirit, the natural or Jewish principles. That you be content at length to go up to the mount with Christ, and be auditors of His sermon; to that other mount with the same Christ, and be transfigured after Him to that spirit of humility, spirit of meekness, spirit of all kind of mercifulness; that peaceable, patient spirit, which will give you a comfortable passage through this valley of Achor here;

yea, though it prove a Red sea of blood, and will fit you for a crown, that true Olympic olive crown; the "peaceable fruits of righteousness," an "eternal weight of glory hereafter." Which God of His infinite mercy grant, through the merit and promise of His Son. [Heb. xii. 11; 2 Cor. iv. 17.]

To whom with the Father, &c.

SERMON XVIII.

Ezek. xviii. 31.

For why will ye die?

Since the devil was turned out of heaven, all his care and counsels have been employed to keep us from coming thither; and finding God's love very forward and increasing towards us, he hath set us upon all ways of enmity and opposition against Him. The first warlike exploit he put us upon, was the building of Babel, when man having fortified himself, and the arm of flesh grown stout, began to reproach and challenge, and even assault the God of heaven. But the success of that boldness cost so dear, that we have ever since been discouraged from such open proud attempts. Our malice and despite hath kept in somewhat more close and secretly, hath retired and settled in the soul; the inward man hath ever since erected its Babel; proud and high imaginations outbidding heaven and God. These were a long while forged in the brain, when instead of the acknowledgment of one true God, all monsters of atheism filled the understanding, sometimes with a multitude and shoal of gods; sometimes deprived it quite, and left it utterly void of any: but now at last, the devil and all the atheism in the world, being at last exorcised and banished out of the brain, by the evidence and power of truth, hath like the legion, which being cast out of the man, had leave to enter the swine, fixed violently, and taken possession, and intrenched itself in the brutish bestial part, the affections. All the swellings, and tumours, and ulcers, that ever shewed themselves in any portion of the circumference, are now retired into the centre. All the atheism or

Luke viii. 32.

heresy that ever soared or floated in the brain, or surface of the soul, is now sunk into the heart; and there the devil is seated at ease, there to set up and fortify and contemn God for ever. So that in brief, the issue of all this is, there is an infinite opposition and thwarting, a professed combat and bandying of forces betwixt the will of man and the will of God; God doing, in a kind, His best on one side, and man on the other. God wonderfully willing and desirous that we should live; man most perversely wilful to his own destruction.

This is a truth of a most dismal importance that concerns you to be instructed in, and will not be more powerfully enforced on you from any place of Scripture than the text which I have read to you, "Why will ye die?" It is God speaks it, and with an infinite emphasis and *πάθος*, to note His passion and affectionateness in desiring our good, and willing that we should live. And then secondly, "Why will you die?" Man's resoluteness and stubborn wretchlessness towards his own ruin, rushing or tumbling as in a precipice violently to hell, like the swine which formerly our wills were resembled to, running full speed down a steep place into the lake. And these are like to prove the parts of my ensuing discourse; first, God's willingness that we should be saved; secondly, man's wilfulness toward his own damnation. And of these plainly to your hearts, not your ears; not so much to advance your knowledge, which though it could be raised to the tallest pitch, might yet possibly bear thee company to hell; but rather to increase your zeal, to work some one good inclination in you, to persuade you to be content to suffer yourselves to be saved; to be but so tame as to be taken by heaven that now even besieges you. And with my affectionate prayers for success to this design, I will presume of your ears and patience, and begin first with the first, God's willingness that we should live. "Why will ye die?" Luke viii. 33.

Amongst all other prejudices and misconceits that our fancy can entertain of God, I conceive not any so frequent or injurious to His attributes, as to imagine Him to deal double with mankind in His word; seriously to will one thing, and to make show of another; to deliver Himself in

one phrase, and reserve Himself in another. It were an unnecessary, officious undertaking to go about to be God's advocate, to apologize for Him, to vindicate His actions, or in Job's phrase, to "accept the person of God." Our proceedings will be more Christian, if we take for a ground or principle, that scorns to be beholding to an artist for a proof, that every word of God is an argument of His will, every action an interpreter of His word. So that howsoever he reveals Himself, either in His Scripture or His works, so certainly He wisheth and intends to us in His secret counsels. Every protestation of His love, every indignation at our stubbornness, every mercy conferred on us, and that not insidiously, but with an intent to do us good, are but ways and methods to express His will; are but rays, and emissions, and gleams of that eternal love which He exhibits to the world. Now there is no way to demonstrate this willingness of God that we should live, *a priori*, or by any thing either in God or us, pre-existent as the cause of it, unless it be His love, which yet is rather its *genus* than its cause, somewhat of larger extent, though otherwise coincident with it. The more vulgar powerful convincing way, is to enforce it to your hearts by its effects, and those divers and familiar: some few of which we will insist on.

[Job xiii. 8.]

1 John iv. 9. And first, and principally, the sending of His Son; "In this was manifest the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." Mark God's love to us in sending His Son that we might live through Him. His love the cause of this mission; this mission, the manifestation and argument of that love; and that we live, the end of both. Had God been any way inclined to rigour or severity, there had needed no great skill, no artificial contrivance for a fair plausible execution of it; it had been but passing us by, the taking no notice of us, the "leaving of us in our blood," and then hell had presently opened its mouth upon us. "We were all cast out in the open field to the loathing of our persons, in the day that we were born," ready for all the vultures infernal to fix on, that hideous Old Testament, διαθήκη ᾅδου, "the testament of hell," or in the mercifulest construction, the "covenant of grace" had passed on us, natu-

Ezek. xvi. [6.] ver. 5.

Eccles. xiv. 12.

rally then—what infidelity now makes us—condemned already; our damnation sealed to us with our life, born to no other inheritance but hell; as if the devil had out of policy fallen before Adam, or rather descended, and that in post, "like lightning," lest if his journey from heaven had been to have been performed after, some other creature should have intercepted him of his prey. But God's bowels were enlarged above the size, wider than either the covetous gates of hell, or that horrid yawning head that is all mouth. It was not within the devil's skill to fear or suspect what a way of mercy and deliverance God had found out for us. Somewhat he understood by the event, the decay of his prophetic arts becoming now his oracle; and even his silence growing vocal to him. But all this could not declare the mystery at large; when Christ was born, he would have been rid of Him betimes, musters all his forces, Pharisees and people, Herods and Pilates, Rome and Jerusalem, and all the friends he had in the world, to make away with Him; and yet when he was just come to the push, to the consummation of his plot, he was afraid to act it; as in the epistle ascribed to Ignatius the Martyr[a], and directed to the Philippians, it is observed, that whilst he was at a pretty distance, *ἔσπευσε γενέσθαι σταυρὸν*, "the devil hastened the structure of Christ's cross," as much as he could; set Judas and all the artificers of hell about the work, *μέλλοντος δὲ γίνεσθαι*, but "when all was even ready," Christ for the cross, and the cross for Christ, then he began to put in demurs; shews Judas an halter, frights Pilate's wife in a dream, she could not sleep in quiet for him; and in sum, uses all means possible to prevent Christ's crucifixion. Yet this, saith Ignatius, not out of any repentance, or regret of conscience, but only being started with the foresight of his own ruin by this means. Christ's suffering being in effect the destruction of his kingdom, His death our triumph over hell, and His cross our trophy. By this you may discern what a miracle of God's love was this giving of His Son; the conceiving of which was above the devil's reach, and wherein he was providentially engaged, and (if we may so speak) *θεοφορούμενος*, carried blindfold by God, to be an instrument of his own ruin, and in a kind, be a co-worker of our salvation.

Luke x. 18.

[a] [Pseudo-Ignatius, Epist. ad Philipp., c. iv. Patr. Apost., tom. ii. p. 119.]

Not to enlarge or expatiate upon circumstances; man being thus involved in a necessity of damnation, and no remedy within the sphere, either of his power or conceit, left to rescue him;—nay, as some have been so bold to say, that God Himself had no other means besides this in His storehouse of miracles to save us, without intrenching on some one of His attributes;—for God then to find out a course that we could never prompt Him to, being solicited to it by nothing in us but our sins and misery, and without any interposition, any further consultation or demur, to part with a piece of Himself to redeem us; *Brachium Domini*, "the arm of the Lord," as Isaiah calls our Saviour. Nay, to send down His very bowels amongst us to witness His compassion; to satisfy for us by His own death, and attach Himself for our liberty; to undergo such hard conditions rather than be forced to a cheap severity; and, that He might appear to love His enemies, to hate His Son. In brief, to fulfil the work without any aid required from us, and make salvation ready to our hands, as manna is called in the sixth of Wisdom, ἑτοῖμος ἄρτος ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ, "bread baked, and sent down ready from heaven," to drop it in our mouths, and exact nothing of us but to accept of it: this is an act of love and singleness, that all the malice we carry about us knows not how to suspect; so far from possibility of a treacherous intent, or double dealing, that if I were a heathen, nay a devil, I would bestow no other appellation on the Christians' God, than what the author of the book of Wisdom doth so often,—φιλόψυχος, the "friend," or the lover of souls. But this is a vulgar, though precious subject, and therefore I shall no longer insist on it. Only before I leave it, would I could see the effect of it expressed in our souls, as well as acknowledged in our looks; your hearts ravished as thoroughly as your brains convinced; your breasts as open to value and receive this superlative mercy, as your tongues to confess it; then could I triumph over hell and death, and scoff them out of countenance; then should the devil be reduced to his old pittance, confined to an empty corner of the world; and suffer as much by the solitariness as darkness of his abode; all his engines and arts of torment should be busied upon himself, and his whole exercise, to curse Christ for ever, that hath thus deprived him

Isa. liii. [1.]

Wisd. xvi. 20.

[cf. Wisd. xi. 26.]

of associates. But alas! we are too solicitous in the devil's behalf, careful to furnish him with companions, to keep him warm in the midst of fire; it is to be feared we shall at last thrust him out of his inheritance. It is a probable argument that God desires our salvation, because that hell, wheresoever it is,—whether at the centre of the earth, or concave of the moon,—must needs be far less than heaven; and that makes us so besiege the gate as if we feared we should find no room there. We begin our journey betimes, lest if we should be forestalled, and had rather venture a throng or crowd in hell, than to expect that glorious liberty of the sons of God. It is to be feared that at the day of judgment, when each body comes to accompany its soul in torment, hell must be let out, and enlarge its territories, to receive its guests. Beloved, there is not a creature here that hath reason to doubt but Christ was sent to die for him, and by that death hath purchased his right to life. Only do but come in, do but suffer yourselves to live, and Christ to have died; do not uncrucify Christ by crucifying Him again by your unbelief; do not disclaim the salvation that even claims right and title to you; and then the angels shall be as full of joy to see you in heaven, as God is willing, nay, desirous to bring you thither; and Christ as ready to bestow that inheritance upon you at His second coming, as at His first to purchase it. Nothing but infidelity restrains Christ's sufferings, and confines them to a few. Were but this one devil cast out of the world, I should be straight of Origen's religion, and preach unto you universal catholic salvation.

[Rom. viii. 21.]

A second argument of God's good meaning towards us, of His willingness that we should live, is the calling of the Gentiles, the dispatching of posts and heralds over the whole ignorant heathen world, and giving them notice of this treasure of Christ's blood. Do but observe what a degree of profaneness and unnatural abominations the Gentile world was then arrived to, as you may read in all their stories; and in the first to the Romans, how well grown and ripe for the devil Christ found them; all of them damnably superstitious and idolatrous in their worship; damnably unclean in their lives; nay, engaged for ever in this road of damnation by a law they had made, μὴ ἀλλοτριονομεῖν, "never to entertain any new

laws [b]," or religion: not to innovate, though it were to get salvation, as besides their own histories, may be gathered out
Acts xvii. 18. of Acts xvii. 18. And lastly, consider how they were hooked in by the devil, to join in crucifying of Christ, that they might be guilty of that blood which might otherwise have saved them, and then you will find no argument to persuade you it was possible that God should have any design of mercy on them. Peter was so resolved of the point that the whole succession of the Gentiles should be damned, that God could
Acts x. 9, sq. scarce persuade him to go and preach to one of them. He was fain to be cast into a trance, and see a vision about it; and for all that he is much troubled about the τὸ κοινὸν καὶ
[Acts x. 14.] ἀκάθαρτον, "their profaneness and uncleanness," that they were not fit for an Apostle to defile himself about their conversion.

And this was the general opinion of all the Jews; they of
Acts x. 45. the "circumcision were astonished at the news." Nay, this is it that the angels wondered at so, when they saw it wrought at the Church by Paul's ministry; never dreaming
Eph. iii. 10. it possible, till it was effected, as may appear, Eph. iii. 10. This was the "mystery, which from the beginning of the
ver. 9. world had been hid in God," ver. 9. One of God's cabinet councils, a mercy decreed in secret, that no creature ever wist of till it was performed.

And in this behalf are we all—being lineally descended from the Gentiles—bound over to an infinite measure both of humiliation and gratitude, for our deliverance from the guilt and reign of that second original sin, that heathenism of our ancestors, and catholic damnation, that sixteen hundred years ago we were all involved in. Beloved, we were long ago set right again, and the obligation lies heavy upon us, to shew this change to have been wrought in us to some purpose; to prove ourselves Christians in grain, so fixed and established, that all the devils in hell shall not be able to reduce us again to that abhorred condition. If we that are thus called out, shall fall back, after so much gospel, to heathen practices, and set up shrines and altars in our hearts to every poor delight that our sottishness can call a God; if we are not called out of their sins, as well as out of their ignorance;

[b] [Cf. Dio Cassius, Hist. Rom., lib. lii. cap. 36. p. 689. ed. Reimar.]

then have we advanced but the further toward hell; we are still but heathen gospellers; our Christian infidelity and practical atheism will but help to charge their guilt upon us, and damn us the deeper for being Christians. Do but examine yourselves on this one interrogatory, whether this calling the Gentiles hath found any effect in your hearts, any influence on your lives; whether your conversations are not still as heathenish as ever? If you have no other grounds or motives to embrace the Gospel, but only because you are born within the pale of the Church, no other evidences of your discipleship but your livery; then God is little beholding to you for your service. The same motives would have served to have made you Turks, if it had been your chance to have been born amongst them: and now all that fair Christian outside is not thankworthy. It is but your good fortune that you are not now at the same work with the old Gentiles, or present Indians, a worshipping either Jupiter or the sun! It was a shrewd speech of Clemens, that the life of every unregenerate man is an heathen life; and the sins of unsanctified men are heathen sins; and the estate of a libertine Christian an heathen estate: and unless our resolutions and practices are consonant to our profession of Christ, we are all still heathens; the Lord make us sensible of this our condition.

The third, and in sum, the powerfulest argument to prove God's willingness that we should live, is, that "He hath bestowed His Spirit upon us;" that as soon as He called up the Son, He sent the Comforter. This may seem to be the main business that Christ ascended to heaven about; so that a man would guess from the 16th chapter of St. John, verse 7, that if it had not been for that, Christ had tarried amongst us till this time; but that it was more expedient to send the Spirit to speak those things powerfully to our hearts, which often and in vain had been sounded in our ears. It is a fancy of the Paracelsians, that if we could suck out the lives and spirits of other creatures, as we feed on their flesh, we should never die: their lives would nourish and transubstantiate into our lives, their spirit increase our spirits, and so our lives grow with our years, and the older we were, by consequence, the fuller of life; and so no difficulty to become immortal.

John xvi. 7.

Thus hath God dealt with us; first sent His Son, His incarnate Son, His own flesh to feed and nourish us; and for all this we "die daily." He hath now given us His own very life and incorporeous essence, a piece of pure God, His very Spirit to feed upon, and digest, that if it be possible we might live. There is not a vein in our souls, unless it be quite pinned and shrivelled up, but hath some blood produced in it by that holy nourishment; every breath that ever we have breathed toward heaven, hath been thus inspired; besides those louder voices of God, either sounding in His word, or thundering in His judgments, there is His calm, soft voice of inspiration, like the night vision of old, which stole in upon the mind, mingled with sleep, and gentle slumber. He draws not out into the field, or meets us as an enemy; but entraps us by surprise, and disarms us in our quarters, by a spiritual stratagem, conquers at unawares, and even betrays, and circumvents, and cheats us into heaven. That precept of Pythagoras[c], *πρὸς τὴν ἀνέμων πνεόντων ἠχὼ προσκυνεῖν*, "To worship at the noise and whistling of the wind," had sense and divinity in it, that Jamblichus that cites it never dreamt of; that every sound and whispering of this Spirit, which rustles either about our ears, or in our hearts,—as the philosopher saith, *Tecum est, intus est*—when it breathes and blows within us, the stoutest faculty of our souls, the proudest piece of flesh about us, should bow down and worship. Concerning the manner of the Spirit's working, I am not, I need not to dispute. Thus far it will be seasonable and profitable for you to know, that many other illuminations and holy graces are to be imputed to God's Spirit, besides that by which we are effectually converted. God speaks to us many times when we answer Him not, and shines about our eyes, when we either wink or sleep. Our many sudden, short-winded ejaculations toward heaven, our frequent but weak inclinations to good, our ephemerous wishes, that no man can distinguish from true piety but by their sudden death; our every day resolutions of obedience, whilst we continue in sin, are arguments that God's Spirit hath shined on us, though the warmth that it produced be soon chilled with the damp it meets within us. For example, there is no doubt,

1 Cor. xv. 31.

[c] [Jamblichus Protrept. Explanation of Symbol. viii.]

beloved, but the Spirit of God accompanies His word, as at this time, to your ears; if you will but open at its knock, and receive, and entertain it in your hearts, it shall prove unto you, according to its most glorious attribute, "the power of God unto salvation:" but if you will refuse it, your stubbornness may repel and frustrate God's work, but not annihilate it; though you will not be saved by it, it is God's still, and so shall continue to witness against you at the day of doom. Every word that was ever darted from that Spirit, as a beam or javelin of that piercing sun, every atom of that flaming sword, as the word is phrased, shall not, though it be rebated, vanish; the day of vengeance shall instruct your souls that it was sent from God, and since it was once refused, hath been kept in store, not to upbraid, but damn you. [Rom. i. 16.]

Many other petty occasions the Spirit ordinarily takes to put off the cloud, and open His face toward us: nay, it were not a groundless doubt whether He do not always shine, and the cloud be only in our hearts, which makes us think the sun is gone down, or quite extinct, if at any time we feel not his rays within us. Beloved, there be many things amongst us that single fire can do nothing upon; they are of such a stubborn, frozen nature, there must be some material thing for the fire to consist in, a sharp iron, red hot, that may bore as well as burn, or else there is small hopes of conquering them. Many men are so hardened and congealed in sin, that the ordinary beam of the Spirit cannot hope to melt them; the fire must come consubstantiate with some solid instrument, some sound, corpulent, piercing judgment, or else it will be very unlikely to thrive. True it is, the Spirit is an omnipotent agent, which can so invisibly infuse and insinuate its virtue through the inward man, that the whole most enraged adversary shall presently fall to the earth, the whole carnal man lie prostrate, and the sinner be without delay converted; and this is a miracle which I desire from my heart might be presently shewed upon every soul here present. [Acts ix. 41.]

But that which is to my present purpose is only this, that God hath also other manners and ways of working, which are truly to be said to have descended from heaven, though they are not so successful as to bring us thither; other more

calm, and less boisterous influences, which if they were received into an honest heart, might prove *semen immortalitatis*, and in time increase, and grow up to immortality.

There is no such incumbrance to trash us in our Christian progress as a fancy that some men get possessed with; that if they are elected they shall be called and saved in spite of their teeth; every man expecting an extraordinary call, because Saul met with one; and perhaps running the more fiercely because Saul was then called, when he was most violent in his full speed of malice against Christians.

In this behalf, all that I desire of you is, first, to consider, that though our regeneration be a miracle, yet there are degrees of miracles, and thou hast no reason to expect that the greatest and strongest miracle in the world, shall in the highest degree be shewed in thy salvation. Who art thou, that God should take such extraordinary pains with thee?

Secondly, to resolve that many precious rays and beams of the Spirit, though when they enter they come with power, yet through our neglect may prove transitory—pass by that heart which is not open for them.

And then thirdly, you will easily be convinced, that no duty concerns us all so strictly, as to observe, as near as we can, when thus the Spirit appears to us; to collect and muster up the most lively, quick-sighted, sprightfulest of our faculties: and with all the perspectives that spiritual optics can furnish us with, to lay wait for every glance and glimpse of its fire or light. We have ways in nature to apprehend the beams of the sun, be they never so weak and languishing, and by uniting them into a burning-glass, to turn them into a fire. Oh that we were as witty and sagacious in our spiritual estate! then it were easy for those sparks which we so often either contemn or stifle, to thrive within us, and at last break forth into a flame.

In brief, incogitancy and inobservance of God's seasons, supine numbness and negligence in spiritual affairs, may on good grounds be resolved on, as the main or sole cause of our final impenitence and condemnation; it being just with God to take those away in a sleep who thus walked in a dream, and at last to refuse them whom He hath so long solicited. He that hath scorned and wasted his inheritance cannot com-

plain if he dies a bankrupt; nor he that hath spent his candle at play, count it hard usage that he is fain to go to bed darkling. It were easy to multiply arguments on this theme, and from every minute of our lives to discern some pawn and evidence of God's fatherly will and desire that we should live. Let it suffice, that we have been large, if not abundant in these three chief ones: first, the giving of His Son to the world; secondly, dispatching the gospel to the Gentiles; and lastly, the sending of His Spirit. We come now to a view of the opposite trenches, which lie pitched at the gates of hell, obstinate and peremptory to besiege and take it: man's resolvedness and wilfulness to die, my second part, "Why will you die?"

There is no one conceit that engages us so deep to continue in sin, that keeps us from repentance, and hinders any seasonable reformation of our wicked lives, as a persuasion that God's will is a cause of all events. Though we are not so blasphemous as to venture to define God the author of sin, yet we are generally inclined for a fancy, that because all things depend on God's decree, whatsoever we have done could not be otherwise; all our care could not have cut off one sin from the catalogue. And so being resolved, that when we thus sinned we could not choose, we can scarce tell how to repent for such necessary fatal misdemeanors; the same excuses which we have for having sinned formerly, we have for continuing still, and so are generally better prepared for apologies than reformation. Beloved, it will certainly much conduce to our edification, instead of this speculation—whose grounds or truth I will not now examine—to fix this practical theorem in our hearts, that the will of man is the principal cause of all our evil, that death, either as it is the punishment of sin, eternal death, or as it is the sin itself, a privation of the life of grace, spiritual death, is wholly to be imputed to our wilful will. It is a problem in Aristotle, why some creatures are longer in conceiving and bringing forth than others, and the sensiblest reason he gives for it, is σκληρότης ὑστέρας[d], "the hardness of the womb," which is like dry earth, that will not presently give any nourishment to either seed or plant; and so is it in the spiritual conception

[d] [Aristot. Problem., sect. 10. § 9.]

and production of Christ, that is, of life in us. The hardness and toughness of the heart, the womb where He is to be born, that ξηρὰ γῆ [e], that "dry earth," in the philosopher's, or that "way-side," or at best "stony ground" in Christ's phrase, is the only stop and delay in begetting of life within us, the only cause of either barrenness or hard travail in the Spirit. Be the brain never so soft and pliable, never so waxy and capable of impressions; yet if the heart be but carnal, if it have any thing much of that "lust of the flesh" in its composition, it will be hard for the spiritual life to be conceived in that man. For faith, the only means by which Christ lives and dwells in us, is to be seated in the heart, i. e. the will and affections, according to the express words, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." So that, be your brains never so swelled and puffed up with persuasions of Christ our Saviour, be they so big that they are ready to lie in, and travail of Christ, as Jove's did of Minerva in the poem [f]; yet if the heart have not joined in the conception, if the seed sown have not taken root and drawn nourishment from the will, it is but an aerial or fantastical birth, or indeed rather a disease or tympany; nay, though it come to some proof, and afterward extend and increase in limbs and proportions never so speciously, yet if it be only in the brain, neither is this to be accounted solid nourishment and augmentation, but such as a chameleon may be thought to have, that feeds on air, and itself is little better, and in sum, not growth but swellings.

[Matt. xiii. 4, 5.]

1 John ii. 15.

Eph. iii. 17.

So then if the will, either by nature or custom of sinning, by familiarity and acquaintance, making them dote on sensual objects otherwise unamiable; by business and worldly ambitious thoughts, great enemies to faith; or by pride and contentment, both very incident to noble personages and great wits, to courtiers and scholars; in brief, if this will, the stronger and more active part of the soul, remain carnal, either in indulgence to many, or, which is the snare of judicious men in chief, of some one prime sin, then cannot all the faith in the world bring that man to heaven; it may work so much miracle, as Simon Magus is said to have done, who undertook to raise the dead, give motion to the head, make the eyes look up or the tongue speak; but the lower part of the man, and that the heaviest, will by no charm or

[e] [Aristot. ibid.]

[f] [Cf. the Homeric Hymn to Pallas.]

spell be brought to stir, but weigh and sink even into hell, will still be carcass and corruption; "damnation is his birthright." And it is impossible, though not absolutely, yet *ex hypothesi*, the second covenant being now sealed, even for God Himself to save him or give him life. It is not David's music that exorcised and quieted Saul's evil spirit, nor Pythagoras's[g] spondees that tamed a man, καὶ ἐπανώρθωσαν, "set him right in his wits for ever, that can work any effect on a fleshy heart." So that Chrysostom[h] would not wonder at the voice that cried, "O altar, altar, hear the voice of the Lord," because Jeroboam's heart was harder than that; nor will I find fault with Bonaventure that made a solemn prayer for a stony heart, as if it were more likely to receive impression than that which he had already of flesh. Ecclus. xx. 25. [1 Kings xiii. 2.]

It were long to insist on the wilfulness of our fleshy hearts, how they make a faction within themselves, and bandy faculties for the devil; how when grace and life appear, and make proffer of themselves, all the carnal affections, like them in the Gospel, "join all with one consent to make excuses;" nothing in our whole lives we are so solicitous for, as to get off fairly, to have made a cleanly apology to the invitations of God's Spirit, and yet for a need rather than go, we will venture to be unmannerly. We have all married a wife, espoused ourselves to some amiable delight or other; we cannot, we will not come. The devil is wiser in his generation than we; he knows the price and value of a soul, and will pay any rate for it rather than lose his market; he will give all the riches in the world rather than miss. And we, at how low a rate do we prize it? it is the cheapest commodity we carry about us. The beggarliest content under heaven is fair, is rich enough to be given in exchange for the soul. *Spiritus non ponderat*, saith the philosopher; the soul being a spirit, when we put it into the balance, weighs nothing; nay, more than so, it is lighter than vanity, lighter than nothing, i. e. it doth not only weigh nothing, but even lifts up the scale it is put into, when nothing is weighed against it. How many sins, how many vanities, how many idols, i. e. in the Scripture phrase, how many nothings be there in the Luke xiv. 18. [1 Cor. viii. 4.]

[g] [Cf. Jamblichus, de Vita Pythagoræ, cap. xxv. §§ 112, 114.]
[h] [S. Chrysostom, De Pœnitentia, Homil. viii. Op., tom. ii. p. 345, E.]

world, each of which will outweigh and preponderate the soul!

It were tedious to observe and describe the several ways that our devilish sagacity hath found out to speed ourselves to damnation, to make quicker dispatch in that unhappy road than ever Elias's fiery chariot could do toward heaven. Our daily practice is too full of arguments, almost every minute of our lives as it is an example, so is it a proof of it. Our pains will be employed to better purpose if we leave that as a worn, beaten, common-place, and betake ourselves to a more necessary theme, a close of exhortation.

And that shall be by way of treaty, as an ambassador sent from God, that you will lay down your arms, that you will be content to be friends with God, and accept of fair terms of composition; which are, that as you have thus long been enemies to God, proclaiming hostility, and perpetually opposing every merciful will of His by that wilfulness, so now being likely to fall into His hands, you will prevent that ruin, you will come in; and whilst it is not too late, submit yourselves, that you may not be forced as rebels and outlaws, but submit as servants. This perhaps may be your last parley for peace, and if you stand out the battery will begin
Heb. x. 31. suddenly, and with it the *horrendum est*, "It is a fearful, hideous thing to fall into the hands of the living God." All that remains upon our wilful holding out may be (the doom
ver. 27. of apostates from Christianity) a "certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, that shall devour the adversaries." And methinks the very emphasis in my text notes as much; "Why will you die?" as if we were just now falling into the pit, and there were but one minute betwixt this time of our jollity and our everlasting hell. Do but lay this one circumstance to your hearts, do but suppose yourselves on a bed of sickness, laid at with a violent burning fever, such a one as shall finally consume the whole world; as it were battered with thundering and lightning, and besieged with fire, where the next throw or plunge of thy disease may possibly separate thy soul from thy body, and the mouth of hell just then open and yawning at thee; and then suppose there were one only minute wherein a seri-

ous resigning up thyself to God might recover you to heaven; O then what power and energy! what force and strong efficacy would there be in this voice from God, "Why will you die?" I am resolved, that heart that were truly sensible of it, that were prepared seasonably by all these circumstances to receive it, would find such inward vigour and spirit from it, that it would strike death dead in that one minute; this *ultimus conatus*, this last spring and plunge, would do more than a thousand heartless heaves in a lingering sickness, and perhaps overcome and quit the danger.

And therefore let me beseech you to represent this condition to yourselves, and not any longer be flattered or cozened in a slow security: "To-day if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." If you let it alone till this day come in earnest, you may then perhaps heave in vain, labour and struggle, and not have breath enough to send up one sigh toward heaven. The hour of our death we are wont to call *tempus improbabilitatis*, a very improbable inch of time to build our heaven in; as after death is *impossibilitatis*, a time wherein it is impossible to recover us from hell. If nothing were required to make us saints but outward performances; if true repentance were but to groan, and faith but to cry, Lord, Lord; we could not promise ourselves that at our last hour we should be sufficient for that; perhaps a lethargy may be our fate, and then what life or spirits even for that? perhaps a fever may send us away raving, in no case to name God, but only in oaths and curses; and then it were hideous to tell you what a Bethlehem we should be carried to. But when that which must save us must be a work of the soul, and a gift of God, how can we promise ourselves that God will be so merciful, whom we have till then contemned, or our souls then capable of any holy impression, having been so long frozen in sin, and petrified even into adamant? Beloved, as a man may come to such an estate of grace here, that he may be most sure he shall not fall, as St. Paul in likelihood was, when he "resolved that nothing could separate him:" so may a man be engaged so far in sin that there is no rescuing from the devil. There is an irreversible estate in evil as well as good, and perhaps I may have arrived to that before my hour of death;

[Ps. xcv. 8.]

[Matt. vii. 21.]

[Rom. viii. 39.]

Exod. ix. 34. for I believe Pharaoh was come to it after the seventh plague hardening his heart; and then I say, it is possible, that thou that hitherto hast gone on in habituate, stupid, customary rebellions, mayest be now at this minute arrived to this pitch, that if thou run on one pace further thou art engaged for ever past recovery. And therefore at this minute, in the strength of your age and lusts, this speech may be as seasonable as if death were seizing on you, "Why will you die?" At what time soever thou repentest God will have mercy; but this may be the last instant wherein thou canst repent, the next sin may benumb or sear thy heart, that even the pangs of death shall come on thee insensibly; that the rest of thy life shall be a sleep, or lethargy, and thou lie stupid in it till thou findest thyself awake in flames. Oh, if thou shouldst pass away in such a sleep! Again, I cannot tell you whether a death-bed repentance shall save you or no. The Cant. iii. 1. spouse sought Christ on her bed, but found Him not. The last of Ecclesiastes would make a man suspect, that remembering God when our feeble impotent age comes on us, would stand us in little stead. Read it, for it is a most learned Tit. ii. 14. powerful chapter. This I am sure of, "God hath chosen to Himself a people zealous of good works." And they that find not some of this holy fire alive within them, till their souls are going out, have little cause to think themselves of God's election. So that perhaps there is something in it, that the Matt. iii. 8. exhortation, "Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance," is expressed by a tense that ordinarily signifies time past, ποιήσατε, "have brought forth fruits." It will not be enough upon an exigence, when there is no way but one with me, to be inclinable to any good works, to resolve to live well when I expect to die. I must have done this, and more too in my life, if I expect any true comfort at my death. There is not any point we err more familiarly in and easily than our spiritual condition; what is likely to become of us after death? any slight fancy that Christ died for us in particular, we take for a faith that will be sure to save us.

Now there is no way to preserve ourselves from this error but to measure our faith and hopes by our obedience; that if we sincerely obey God, then are we true believers. And this cannot well be done by any that begins not till he is on his

death-bed; be his inclinations to good then never so strong, his faith in Christ never so lusty; yet how knows he whether it is only fear of death, and a conviction that in spite of his teeth he must now sin no longer, that hath wrought these inclinations, produced this faith in him?

Many a sick man resolves strongly to take the physician's dose, in hope that it will cure him; yet when he comes to taste its bitterness will rather die than take it. If he that on his death-bed hath made his solemnest, severest vows, should but recover to a possibility of enjoying those delights which now have given him over, I much fear his fiercest resolutions would be soon out-dated. Such inclinations that either hover in the brain only, or float on the surface of the heart, are but like those wavering, temporary thoughts, "Like a wave of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed;" Jam. i. 6. they have no firmness or stable consistence in the soul; it will be hard to build heaven on so slight a foundation.

All this I have said, not to discourage any tender, languishing soul, but by representing the horrors of death to you now in health, to instruct you in the doctrine of mortality betimes, so to speed and hasten your repentance; now, as if to-morrow would be too late, as if there were but a small isthmus or inch of ground between your present mirth and jollity and your everlasting earnest.

To gather up all on the clue. Christ is now offered to you as a Jesus: the times and sins of your heathenism and unbelief, "God winketh at." The Spirit proclaims all this by Acts xvii. the Word to your hearts; and now—God knows if ever again 30. —commands all men "every where to repent."

Oh that there were such a spirit in our hearts, such a zeal to our eternal bliss, and indignation at hell, that we would give one heave and spring before we die; that we would but answer those invitations of mercy, those desires of God, that we should live with an inclination, with a breath, with a sigh toward heaven.

Briefly, if there be any strong, violent, boisterous devil within us, that keeps possession of our hearts against God; if the lower sensual part of our soul; if an habit of sin, i. e. a combination or legion of devils, will not be overtopped by reason or grace in our hearts; if a major part of our carnal

faculties be still canvassing for hell; if for all our endeavours and pains it may appear to us that this kind of evil spirit will not be cast out, save only by fasting and prayer; then have we yet that remedy left, first, to fast and pine, and keep him weak within, by denying him all foreign, fresh provision, all new occasions of sin, and the like, and so to block, and in time starve him up: and then secondly, to pray that God will second and fortify our endeavours; that He will force, and rend, and ravish this carnal devil out of us; that He will subdue our wills to His will; that He will prepare and make ready life for us, and us for life; that He will prevent us by His grace here, and accomplish us with His glory hereafter.

[Matt. xvii. 21.]

Now to him, &c.

SERMON XIX.

JER. v. 2.

Though they say, The Lord liveth; surely they swear falsely.

NOT to waste any time or breath, or—which men in this delicate and effeminate age are wont to be most sparing and thrifty of—any part of your precious patience unprofitably, but briefly to give you a guess whither our discourse is like to lead you, we will severally lay down and sort to your view every word of the text single; and so we may gather them up again, and apply them to their natural proper purposes.

First, then, the particle "though" in the front, and "surely" in the body of the text, are but bands and junctures to keep all together into one proposition.

Secondly, the pronoun "they," in each place, is in the letter the Jews, in application, present Christians; and being indefinite, might seem to be of the same extent in both places, did not the matter alter it, and make it universal in the former, and particular in the latter. For artists say, that an indefinite sign, where the matter is necessary, is equivalent to an universal, where but contingent, to a particular. Now to say "the Lord liveth," was and is necessary; though not by any logical, yet by a political necessity; the government and human laws, under which then the Jews and now we Christians live, require this profession necessarily at our hands: but to "swear falsely," not to perform what before they professed, is *materia contingens*, a matter of no necessity, but free-will and choice, that no human law can see into; and therefore we must not interpret by the rules of art, or charity,

that all were perjured, but some only; though it is probable a major part; and as we may guess by the first verse of this
v r. 1. chapter, well nigh all of them.

Thirdly, to "say" is openly to make profession, and that very resolutely and boldly, that none may dare to distrust it; nay, with an oath to confirm it to jealous opinions, as appears by the latter words, "They swear falsely," while they do but
Jer. iv. 2. "say:" and, "Thou shalt swear, The Lord liveth," &c.

Fourthly, "the Lord," i. e. both in Christianity and orthodox Judaism the whole Trinity.

Fifthly, "liveth," i. e. by way of excellency hath a life of His own, independent and eternal, and in respect of us is the fountain of all life and being that we have; and not only of life, but motion, and perfection, and happiness, and salvation, and all that belongs to it. In brief, to say, "The Lord liveth," is to acknowledge Him in His essence, and all His attributes, contained together under that one principle; on that of life, to believe whatever Moses and the prophets then, or now our Christian faith, hath made known to us of Him.

Sixthly, to falsify and swerve from truth becomes a further aggravation, especially in the present instance; though they make mention of that God, who is "Yea," and "Amen," and loves a plain veracious speech, yet they swear; though by loud and dreadful imprecations they bespeak Him a witness and a judge unto the criminal, pray as devoutly for destruction for their sin as the most sober penitent can do for its pardon, yet are they perjured; "they swear falsely."

More than all this, they openly renounce the Deity when they call upon Him; their hearts go not along with their words and professions; though it be the surest truth in the world that they swear when they assert that "the Lord liveth," yet they are perjured in speaking of it; though they make a fair show of believing in the brain, and from the teeth outward, they never lay the truth that they are so violent for at all to their hearts; or as the original hath it, לשפר, *in vanum*, to no purpose it is that they swear, no man that sees how they live will give any heed to their words, will imagine that they believe any such matter.

So now having paced over, and as it were spelt every

word single, there will be no difficulty for the rawest understanding to put it together, and read it currently enough in this proposition; amongst the multitude of professors of Christianity there is very little real piety, very little true belief.

In the verse next before my text there is an "O yes" made, a proclamation, nay, a hue and cry, and hurrying about the streets, if it were possible to find out but a man that were a sincere believer; and here in my text is brought in a *Non est inventus*, "Though they say, The Lord liveth,"—a multitude of professors indeed every where,—"yet surely they swear falsely;" there is no credit to be given to their words; infidelity and hypocrisy is in their hearts; for all their fair believing professions, they had an unfaithful rebellious heart, and the event manifested it, "they are departed and gone," ver. 23. arrant apostates in their lives, by which they were to be tried; "Neither say they in their hearts, Let us fear the ver. 24. Lord," whatsoever they flourished with their tongues.

Now for a more distinct survey of this horrible wretched truth, this heathenism of Christians, and infidelity of believers,—the true ground of all false swearing, and indeed of every other sin,—we will first examine wherein it consists; secondly, whence it springs; the first will give you a view of its nature, the second its root and growth, that you may prevent it. The first will serve for an ocular or mathematical demonstration, called by artists ὅτι, "that" it is so; the second a rational or physical διότι, "how" it comes about. The first to convince of the truth of it, the second to instruct you in its causes.

And first of the first, wherein this infidelity, and to speak more plainly, perjury of formal believers consists; "Though they say," &c.

Since that rather fancy than divinity of the Romanists, schoolmen, and casuists, generally defining faith to be a bare assent to the truth of God's word seated only in the understanding, was by the protestant divines banished out of the schools, as a faith for a chameleon to be nourished with, which can feed on air; as a direct piece of sorcery and conjuring, which will help you to remove mountains only by thinking you are able; briefly, as a chimera or fantastical

nothing, fit to be sent to limbo for a present; since, I say, this magical divinity which still possesses the Romanist, and also a sort of men who would be thought most distant from them, hath been exorcised, and silenced, and cast out of our schools—would I could say out of our hearts—by the Reformation, the nature of faith hath been most admirably explained; yet the seat or subject of it never clearly set down, —some confining it to the understanding, others to the will, —till at last it pitched upon the whole soul, the intellective nature. For the soul of man, should it be partitioned into faculties,—as the grounds of our ordinary philosophy would persuade us,—it would not be stately enough for so royal a guest: either room would be too pent and narrow to entertain at once so many graces as attend it. Faith therefore, that it may be received in state, that it may have more freedom to exercise its sovereignty, hath required all partitions to be taken down; that sitting in the whole soul it may command and order the whole man; is not in the brain sometimes, as its gallery, to recreate and contemplate; at another in the heart, as its parlour to feed, or a closet to dispatch business; but if it be truly that royal personage which we take it for, it is repletive in the whole house at once, as in one room, and that a stately palace, which would be much disgraced, and lose of its splendour, by being cut into offices: and accordingly this royal grace is an entire absolute prince of a whole nation,—not as a tetrarch of Galilee, a sharer of a Saxon heptarchy,—and described to us as one single act, though of great command; and defined to be an assent and adherence to the goodness of the object;—which object is the whole word of God, and specially the promises of the gospel. So then, to believe, is not to acknowledge the truth of Scripture, and the articles of the Creed,—as vulgarly we use knowledge,—but to be affected with the goodness and excellency of them, as the most precious objects which the whole world could present to our choice; to embrace them as the only desirable thing upon the earth; and to be resolutely and uniformly inclined to express this affection of ours, in our practice, whensoever there shall be any competition betwixt them and our dearest delights. For the object of our faith is not merely speculative, somewhat to be understood only,

and assented to as true, but chiefly moral, a truth to be prosecuted with my desires through my whole conversation, to be valued above my life, and set up in my heart as the only shrines I worship.

So that he that is never so resolutely sworn to the Scriptures,—believes all the commands, prohibitions, and promises never so firmly, if he doth not adhere to them in his practice, and by particular application of them as a rule to guide him in all his actions, express that he sets a true value on them; if he do not this, he is yet an infidel; all his religion is but like the beads-man's, who whines over his creed and commandments over a threshold so many times a week, only as his task to deserve his quarterage, or to keep correspondence with his patron. Unless I see his belief expressed by uniform obedience, I shall never imagine that he minded what he said. The sincerity of his faith is always proportionable to the integrity of his life; and so far is he to be accounted a Christian as he performs the obligation of it, the promise of his baptism. Will any man say that Eve believed God's inhibition, when she eat the forbidden fruit? If she did, she was of a strange intrepid resolution, to run into the jaws of hell and never boggle. It is plain by the story that she heard God, but believed the serpent; as may appear by her obedience, the only evidence and measure of her faith. Yet can it not be thought, that she that was so lately a work of God's omnipotence, should now so soon distrust it, and believe that He could not make good His threatenings. The truth is this; she saw clearly enough in her brain, but had not sunk it down into her heart; or perhaps she assented to it in the general, but not as appliable to her present case. This assent was like a bird fluttering in the chamber, not yet confined to a cage, ready to escape at the first opening of the door or window; as soon as she opens either ears or eyes to hearken to the serpent or behold the apple, her former assent to God is vanished, and all her faith bestowed upon the devil. It will not be Pelagianism to proceed and observe how the condition of every sin since this time hath been an imitation of that. The same method in sin hath ever since been taken, first to revolt from God, and then to disobey; first to become infidels, and then sinners. Every murmuring of the Israel-

ites was a defection from the faith of Israel, and turning back to Egypt in their hearts.

Infidelity, as it is the fountain from whence all rebellion springs,—faith being an adherence, and "every departure from the living God, arising from an evil heart of unbelief,"—so it is also the channel where it runs; not any beginning or progress in sin, without a concomitant degree of either weakness or want of faith. So that heathens or heretics are not the main enemies of Christ,—as the question *de oppositis fidei* is stated by the Romanists,—but the hypocrite and libertine, he is the heathen in grain, an heretic of Lucifer's own sect; one that the devil is better pleased with than all the catalogue in Epiphanius or the Romish calendar. For this is it that Satan drives at; an engine by which he hath framed us most like himself; not when we doubt of the doctrine of Christ,—for himself believes it fully, no man can be more firmly resolved of it,—but when we heed it not in our lives, when we cleave not to it in our hearts; when instead of living by faith, *ὑποστέλλομεν*, we draw back, and cowardly subduce ourselves and forsake our colours, refusing to be marshalled in His ranks, or fight under His banner. Arrian the Stoic philosopher hath an excellent discourse concerning the double infidelity, of the brain and heart, very appliable; *Δίτται ἀπολιθώσεις, κ.τ.λ.*, "There are two sorts of this senselessness and stupidity, whereby men are hardened into stones; the first of the understanding part, the second of the practical." He that will not assent to things manifest, his brain is frozen into a stone or mineral; there is no more reasoning with him than with a pillar. The academic's *ἀκαταληψία*[a], never to believe or comprehend any thing, was a stupid philosophy, like to have no disciples but posts or statues; and therefore long ago laughed out of the schools, as an art of being brutes, or metamorphosis, not to instruct but transform them: he could not remain a man that was thus incredulous. But the second stupidity, that of the practical, not to abstain from things that are hurtful, to embrace that which would be their death,—the vice, though not doctrine of the epicures,—though this were an argument, both in his and Scripture phrase, of a "stony heart," yet was it such an

Heb. iii. 12.

Heb. x. 38.

[a] [Cf. e. g. Sextus Empericus, Pyrrhon. Hypotyp., p. 1. ed. Bekker.]

one as the lustiest, sprightfulest men in the world carried about with them. Nay, "It was an evidence," saith he, "of their strength and valour, of a heart of metal and proof, to have all modesty and fear of ill cold as a stone, frozen and dead within it[b]." And thus holds it in Christianity, as it did then in reason: not to believe the truth of Scripture, to deny that the "Lord liveth," would argue a brain as impenetrable as marble, and eyes as crystal: we sooner suspect that he is not a man, that he is out of his senses, than such an infidel. Some affected atheists I have heard of, that hope to be admired for eminent wits by it: but I doubt whether any ever thought of it in earnest, and (if I may so say) conscientiously denied a Deity. But to deny Him in our lives, to have a heart of marble or adamant, *ψυχὴν ἀπονεκρουμένην*, saith Arrian[c], "a dead stupified soul," *οὐδὲν μέλει*, it is so frequent amongst us, that it is not worth observing. He is but a puny in the devil's camp that hath not a privy coat within him to secure his heart from any stroke that God or Scripture can threaten him with.

Thus you see wherein this Christian infidelity consists, in the not rooting faith in the heart; in indulgence to those practices which directly contradict his doctrine. So that though every commission of sin be not incompatible with the habit of faith, so far as to denominate him an infidel; yet is it from the not exercising of faith actually that I ever sin; and every man in the same degree that he is a sinner, so far is he an unbeliever. So that this conversible retrogradous Sorites may shut up all. He that truly believes, assents in his heart to the goodness as well as the truth of Scripture: he that assents so in his heart, approves it according to its real excellency above all rivals in the world: he that thus approves, when occasion comes, makes an actual choice of God's Word before all other most precious delights: he that actually makes the choice, performs uniform obedience, without any respect of sins or persons: he that performs this obedience, never indulges himself in sin. And then *e converso*, backward, thus: he that indulges himself in

[b] *Ἂν δὲ τίνος τὸ ἐντρεπτικὸν καὶ αἰδῆμον ἀπονεκρωθῇ, τοῦτο ἔτι καὶ δύναμιν καλοῦμεν.*—[Arrian, Epicteti Dissertat., lib. i. c. 5. § 3. ad init.]

[c] [Arrian, ibid., § 4.]

sin, doth not uniformly obey the Word: he that doth not so obey, doth not actually make choice of it before all competitors: he that makes not this choice, approves it not according to its real excellency above all things in the world: he that doth not so approve, assents not to the absolute goodness of it in his heart: he that so assents not, doth not truly believe; therefore every indulgent sinner is an infidel. And then look about you and within you: whosoever say, "The Lord liveth," and yet remain in your ways of sin, be you never so stout or proud-hearted, my prophet gives you the lie: if you are incensed, and swear that you are in the truth, and stand upon your reputation, his answer is mannerly, but tart, "Surely you swear falsely;" every indulgent
1 John iii. 6. sinner is an infidel. "Whosoever sins, hath not seen Christ, neither known Him." But amongst professors of the gospel there be a multitude of habitual sinners, *ergo* of infidels; ὅπερ ἔδει πρῶτον δεῖξαι, the thing which in the first place we undertook to demonstrate.

We now come to the next thing proposed, the root or fountain of this hypocritical faith; where we are to enquire how it comes about, that they which are so forward to profess, are so far from true belief. And higher in our search we cannot go than Adam's fall; for the spring-head of all this infidelity—as for God's absolute decree, in rejecting men's persons, and then suffering and leading them to an acknowledgment of the truth of the gospel, only that they may be unexcusable, I will not be so vain or unseasonable to examine. Adam had once the tree of life to have eaten, and have been immortal; to have confirmed him and his posterity into an irreversible estate of happiness: but since his disobedient heart preferred the tree of knowledge before that of life, the tree of life hath never thrived currently with his progeny. All our care, and traffic, and merchandise, hath been for knowledge, never prizing or cheapening so poor a commodity as life. Ξύλον γνώσεως ἐστὶν ἐὰν παρανομῶμεν[d], κ.τ.λ., "All sin is from the tree of knowledge;" and that hath rooted it so deep, and given it so fair a growth within us.

As for the tree of life, seeing then we would not feed on it, we were never since suffered to come within reach: the

[d] [Clemens Alexandr. Strom., lib. iii. c. 17. § 104. p. 559. ed. Potter.]

cherubins and a flaming sword have fenced it round about; and that makes men grow so unproportionably into such monstrous shapes, vast, strong, swollen heads; and weak, thin, crazy bodies, like Pharaoh's lean kine, lank, and very ill-favoured: men for the most part having brains to understand, and eyes to see, and tongues to profess; but neither hearts to apply, nor hands to practise, nor feet to walk the ways of God's commandments: as one far spent in a consumption, who hath his senses perfectly enough, when he is not able to go. It is only the effectual grace of God—of which that other tree was but an emblem—which must give us life and strength to practise what we know. And this amongst us is so little cared for, finds such disesteem and slight observance when it appears, meets with such resolute, hardened, stubborn hearts, that it is a miracle if it ever be brought to submit itself to such coarse entertainment. Gen. iii. 24.

And this is the first and main ground of this hypocritical faith, our corrupt, immoderate desires of knowledge, and neglect of grace. The second ground more evidently discernible in us, is, the secret consent and agreement betwixt our carnal desires and divine knowledge; and the antipathy and incompatibleness of the same with true faith.

The first pair dwell many times very friendly and peaceably together, do not quarrel in an age, or pass an affront or cross word. Knowledge doth seldom justle or offer violences to the desires of the flesh; a man may be very knowing and very lewd; of a towering brain and a grovelling soul; rich in speculation, and poor in practice.

But for the other pair, they are like opposite signs in the heaven, have but a vicissitude of presence or light in our hemisphere, never appear or shine together. Faith lusteth and struggleth against the flesh, and the flesh against faith. The carnal part is as afraid of faith, as the devil was of Christ: for faith being seated in the concurrence of the dictate of judgment, and—on the other side—the sway of the affections, the one must either couch or be banished at the other's entrance; and then it cries out in the voice of the devil, "What have I to do with Thee?" or, as the words will bear, τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοὶ; "What communion can there be betwixt me and Thee?" Thou precious grace of God, "Art Mark i. 24.

Thou come to torment and dispossess me before my time?" O what a stir there is in the flesh, when faith comes to take its throne in the heart; as at the news of Christ's incar-
Matt. ii. 3. nation corporal, so at His spiritual, "Herod the king is troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." All the reigning Herod sins, and all the Jerusalem of habitual ruling lusts and affections, are in great disorder, as knowing that this new King abodes their instant destruction.

It was Aristotle's[e] observation, that the mathematics being an abstract knowledge, had nothing in them contrary to passions; and therefore young men and dissolute might study and prove great proficients in them, if they had but a good apprehension; there was no more required: and that perhaps is the reason that such studies as these, history and geometry, and the like, go down pleasantliest with those which have no design upon books, but only to rid them of some hours, which would otherwise lie on their hands. The most studious of our gentry ordinarily deal in them, as inoffensive, tame, peaceable studies, which will never check them for any the most inordinate affections. But of morality, saith he, and practical knowledge, a young man or intemperate is uncapable: you may make him con the precepts without book, or say them by rote, ἀλλ' οὐ πιστεύει[f], "He cannot be said to believe a word of them;" his heart is so possessed with green, fresh, boisterous lusts, that he cannot admit any sober precepts any further than his memory. If you are in earnest with him to apply and practise what he reads, you exact of him beyond his years; he is not solemn enough for so sad severe employment; and therefore it is concluded that he is fit for any intellectual virtue, rather than prudence. This consists in a peaceable temper of the mind; an artist he may prove and never live the better; suppose him one of youthful luxuriant desires, and never think he will be taught to live by rule, all the learning and study in books will never give him Aristotle's moral prudence, much less our spiritual, which is by interpretation, faith.

And this is the second ground of infidelity amongst Christians, the competibility of knowledge, and incompeti-

[e] Eth. vi. 9. [f] [Aristot., ibid.]

bility of true faith, with carnal desires. The third is, the easiness of giving assent to generalities, and difficulty of particular application.

A common truth delivered in general terms is received without any opposition: should it be proposed, whether nothing be to be done but that which is just? whether drunkenness were not a vice? whether only an outside of religion would ever save a man? no man would ever quarrel about it. When thus Nathan and David discoursed, they were both of one mind; the one could talk no more against unconscionable dealing than the other would assent to. If you propose no other problems than these, the debauchedest man under heaven would not dispute against you. But all quarrelling, saith the Stoic[g], is *περὶ τὴν ἐφαρμογὴν τῶν προλήψεων ταῖς ἐπὶ μέρους οὐσίαις*, "about the application of general granted rules, to personal, private cases." [2 Sam. xii.]

The Jews, and Assyrians, and Egyptians, and Romans, are all agreed, that holiness is to be preferred above all things; but whether it be not impious to eat swine's flesh and the like, which of them observes the rules of holiness most exactly, there the strife begins.

Common general declamations against sin are seldom ever offensive; and therefore the master of rhetorics[h] finds fault with them as dull, liveless, unprofitable eloquence, that no man is affected with. The cowardliest bird in the air is not afraid of the falcon, as long as she sees him soaring and never stoop: but when the axe that was carried about the wood, threatening all indifferently, shall be laid to the root of the tree, when Nathan shall rejoinder with a "thou art the man," and St. Paul come home to his Corinthians after his declamation against fornicators and idolaters with "and such were some of you," then their hearts come to the touchstone; this is a trial of their belief: if they will forsake their sins, which before their judgment condemned at a distance; if they will practise the holiness and integrity which they were content to hear commended. [2 Sam. xii. 7.] 1 Cor. vi. 11.

That famous war of the Trojans and Iliads of misery, following it in Homer, were all from this ground. The two

[g] *Πρόληψις προλήψει οὐ μάχεται.*— Arr. Epict. Dissertat., lib. i. c. 22. § 1.

[h] [Perhaps refers to Aristot. Rhet., lib. ii. c. 22.]

great captains at the treaty agree very friendly that just dealing was very strictly to be observed by all men; and yet neither would one of them restore the pawn committed to his trust, nor the other divide the spoils: each as resolute not to practise, as both before unanimous to approve.

There is not a thing more difficult in the world, than to persuade a carnal man that that which concerns all men should have any thing to do with him; that those promises of Christ which are confessed to be the most precious under heaven, should be fitter for his turn than this amiable, lovely sin, that now solicits him. That Scripture is inspired by God; and therefore in all its dictates to be believed and obeyed, is a thing fully consented on amongst Christians. We are so resolved on it, that it is counted but a dull barren question in the schools, a man can invent nothing to say against by way of argument; and if a preacher in a sermon should make it his business to prove it to you, you would think he either suspected you for Turks, or had little else to say. But when a particular truth of Scripture comes in balance with a pleasing sin, when the general prohibition strikes at my private lust, all my former assent to Scripture is vanished, I am hurried into the embraces of my beloved delight. Thus when Paul "reasoned of temperance, righteousness, and judgment to come, Felix trembled." His trembling shews that he assented to Paul's discourse; and as in the devils, it was an effect of a general belief; but this subject of temperance and judgment to come agreed not with Felix's course of life. His wife Drusilla was held by usurpation; he had tolled her away from her husband, the king of the Emiseni, saith Josephus[k], and therefore he could hear no more of it: he shifts and compliments it off till another time, and never means to come in such danger again to be converted, for fear of a divorce from his two treasures, his heathenism and his whore.

Acts xxiv. 25.

Jam. ii. 29.

Thus was Agrippa converted from the shoulders upward, which he calls "almost a Christian;" or as the phrase may be rendered, ἐν ὀλίγῳ, "a little way," convinced as to the general truths in his brain; but the lower half, his heart and affections, remained as heathenish as ever.

Acts xxvi. 28.

[k] Antiq. Jud., lib. xx. c. 7.

And this is the third ground of practical unbelief, that generalities can be cheaply believed without parting from any thing we prize; the doctrine of the Trinity can be received, and thwart never a carnal affection as being an inoffensive truth. Christ's sufferings and satisfaction for sin by the natural man may be heard with joy; but particular application is very difficult: that our obedience to every command of that Trinity must be sincere: that we must forego all, and hate our own flesh to adhere to so merciful a Saviour, and express our love to the most contemptible soul under heaven, as He hath loved us; that we must at last expect Him in majesty as a judge, whom we are content to hug and embrace in His humility as a Saviour: this is a bloody word, as Moses' wife counted the circumcision too harsh and rough to be received into such pampered, tender, fleshy hearts. [Exod. iv. 26.]

The fourth ground is a general humour that is gotten in the world, to take care of nothing but our reputations: nor God, nor life, nor soul, nor any thing can weigh with it in the balance. Now it is a scandalous thing, a foul blot to one's name, to be counted an atheist, an arrant infidel, where all are Christians; and therefore for fashion's sake we will believe; and yet sometime the devil hath turned this humour quite the contrary way, and made some men as ambitious of being counted atheists, as others of being Christians. It will shortly grow into a gentile garb, and part of courtship, to disclaim all religion in shew, as well as deeds. Thus are a world of men in the world, either professed atheists, or atheistical professors, upon the same grounds of vainglory; the one to get, the other to save their reputation in the world. Thus do many men stand up at the Creed, upon the same terms as gallants go into the field; that have but small maw to be killed, only to keep their honour, that they might not be branded and mocked for cowards. And yet certainly in the truth, these are the veriest dastards under heaven; no worldly man so fearful of death, or pious man of hell, as these are of disgrace.

The last ground I shall mention, and indeed the main of all, is, the subtlety and wiliness of the devil. He hath tried all his stratagems in the world, and hath found none like this for the undermining and ruining of souls, to suffer them

to advance a pretty way in religion, to get their heads full of knowledge, that so they may think they have faith enough, and walk to hell securely. The devil's first policies were by heresies to corrupt the brain, to invade and surprise Christianity by force: but he soon saw this would not hold out long; he was fain to come from batteries to mines, and supplant those forts that he could not vanquish. The fathers—and amongst them chiefly Leo[1], in all his writing—within the first five hundred years after Christ, observe him at this ward, *ut quos vincere ferro flammisque non poterat, cupiditatibus irretiret, et sub falsa Christiani nominis professione corrumperet.* He hoped to get more by lusts than heresies, and to plunge men deepest in a high conceit of their holy faith. He had learned by experience from himself, that all the bare knowledge in the world would never sanctify; it would perhaps give men content, and make them confident and bold of their estate; and by presuming on such grounds, and prescribing merit to heaven by their "Lord, Lord," even "seal them up to the day of damnation;" and therefore it is ordinary with Satan to give men the tether a great way, lest they should grumble at his tyranny, and prove apostates from him upon hard usage. Knowledge is pleasant, and books are very good company; and therefore if the devil should bind men to ignorance, our speculators and brain epicures would never be his disciples; they would go away sadly, as the young man from Christ, who was well affected with His service, but could not part with his riches. So then you shall have his leave to know and believe in God, as much as you please, so you will not obey Him; and be as great scholars as Satan himself, so you will be as profane. The heart of man is the devil's palace, where he keeps his state; and as long as he can strengthen himself there by a guard and band of lusts, he can be content to afford the outworks to God, divine speculation, and never be disturbed or affrighted by any enemy at such a distance.

Matt. xix. 22.

Thus have you the grounds also whereupon true faith—which is best defined a spiritual prudence, an application of spiritual knowledge to holy practice—should be so often

[1] S. Leo. Mag. [cf. e. g. tom. i. pp. 94, 133, 134, 179. The express passage has not been found.]

wanting in men which are very knowing, and the fairest professors of Christianity.

Now lest this discourse also should reach no further than your ears, lest that which hath been said should be only assented to in the general as true, not applied home to your particular practices, and so do you no more good than these general professions did here to the Jews, only to prove you perjured hypocrites, "swearing falsely, whilst you say the Lord liveth," we will endeavour to leave some impression upon your hearts by closing all with application.

And that shall be in brief meekly to desire you; and if that will not serve the turn, by all the mercies of heaven, and horrors of hell, to adjure you to examine yourselves on these two interrogatories, which my text will suggest to you, first, whether you are as good as the Jews here? secondly, whether you are not, the best of you, altogether as bad?

For the first, the Jews here said the "Lord liveth," were very forward to profess; and it were some, though but a low measure of commendation, for us to be no worse than Jews. Let there go a severe inquisition out from the royal majesty over the whole court, or at least from every particular man upon himself; and bring in an impartial verdict, whether there be not some amongst you, that are not come thus far as to say, "the Lord liveth." Some are so engaged in a trade of misshapen, horrid, monstrous vices, have so framed and fashioned the whole fabric of their lives, without any blush or lineament of God in them, that they are afraid ever to mention Him in earnest, for fear of putting them out of their course; they dare not believe too much of God, lest it should be their undoing; a little sense of Him would take off many of their tricks of sinning, and consequently spoil their thriving in the world; like Diana's silversmith, "for by this craft they have their wealth." The least glimpse of God in these men's hearts, nay, one solemn mention of Him in their mouths, were enough to bring them into some compass, to upbraid their ways, and reprove their thoughts. Were these men taken to task according to the canon laws of our kingdom, and not suffered to live any longer amongst Christians, till they understood clearly the promise of their baptism, till they durst come and make the same vow in

Acts xix. 24.

their own persons, before all the congregation, which in their infancy their sureties made for them; were our canon of confirmation duly put in execution, and every one, as soon as he were capable, either persuaded or forced to fit himself for the receiving of it,—as it is severely required by our rubric, though much neglected in the practice;—I doubt not but there would be fewer sins amongst us, much more knowledge of God, and mentioning of His name, without the help of oaths and blasphemies, to which God now is in a kind beholding that ever He comes into our mouths. But now men having a great way to go in sin, and nothing in the world to stop them, begin their journey as soon as they are able to go, and make such haste—like the sun, or giant in the Psalmist—to run their course, are so intent upon the task the devil hath set them, that they can never stay to see or hear of God in their lives, which yet is legible and palpable in every syllable of the world. If they are so well brought up as to have learned their Creed and Catechism, they have no other use for it but to break jests, and swear by; and would soon forget God's very name or attributes, did they not daily repeat them over—as schoolboys their parts,—and often comment on them by oaths and profanations; and these are ἄθεοι in the Apostle's phrase, "without God in the world."

[Ps. xix. 5.]

Eph. ii. 12.

Others there are of a prouder, loftier strain, ἀντίθεοι, and θεομάχοι, that pitch camp, and arm and fortify themselves against God, that would fain be a forging some other religion, they are so weary and cloyed with this. Thus have I heard of some that have sought earnestly for an Alcoran, and profess an opinion that all true divinity lies there, and expect to be esteemed great wits, of a deep reach, for this supposal. Others that have not skill enough to understand Turkism, yet have lusts enough to admire it, and the brave carnal paradise it promises; and if they cannot persuade themselves to believe in it, yet they fancy it notably; and because they cannot expect to have it in another life, they will be sure of it in this.

Hence do they advance to such a pitch of sensuality, as heathenism was never guilty of; their whole life is a perpetual study of the arts of death, and their whole souls an

holocaust or burnt sacrifice to their fleshly lusts. It were an horrid representation but to give you in a diagram the several arts that the god of this world hath now taught men to vilify and reproach the God of heaven. Professed atheism begins to set up; it comes in fashion, and then some courtiers must needs be in it. Profaning of Scripture, and making too cheap of it, was never so ordinary; that holy volume was never so violently and coarsely handled, even ravished and deflowered by unhallowed lips. It is grown the only stuff in request, and ordinariest garment to clothe a piece of scurrilous wit in, and the best of us can scarce choose but give it some applause. Beloved, there is not a sin in the world that sticks closer to him that once entertained it; the least indulgence in it is a desperate sign. It is called the "chair of scorners," a sin of ease and pleasure: [Ps. i. 1.] a man that uses it, that is once a merry atheist, seldom, if ever, proves a sad sober Christian. Julian, and many others, have gone scoffing to hell,—like men whom custom of mocking hath made wry-mouthed,—scarcely composing themselves to a solemn countenance, till horror either of hell or conscience hath put smiling out of date. And if any of these sins are but crept in amongst you, it will be worthy our enquiry and examination;—and God grant your own impartial consciences may return you not guilty:—however this will but prove you no worse than Jews, for they here acknowledge God in their brain and tongues; they said, "The Lord liveth."

Your second interrogatory must be, whether whilst you thus profess, you do not also swear falsely? And then it is to be feared that every action of your lives will bring in an evidence against you. It were an accusation perhaps that you seldom hear of, to be challenged for hypocrites, to be turned puritans and pretenders to holiness: yet this is it my text must charge you with; professing of religion, and never practising it; assenting to the truth of Scripture in your brain, but not adhering to it in your hearts; believing in Christ, and yet valuing Him beneath the meanest sin you meet with. Look over your Creed, and observe whether your lives do not contradict every word in it; and is it not hypocrisy and perjury, or, if you will have it, high compli-

menting with God, to be thus profuse and prodigal in our professions, which we never mean to perform? Then is it to be called belief, when it is sunk down into our hearts, when it hath taken root in a well-tempered soil, and begins to spring above ground, and hasten into an ear. That which grows like moss on the tiles of an house, which is set no deeper than the fancy, will never prove either permanent or solid nourishment to the soul. It were a new hour's work to shew every defect in our faith by our defections and desertions of God in our manners; yet if you will be in earnest with yourselves, and apply the grounds premised to your serious examination, your meditations may throughly make up what here is likely to be omitted.

One thing take home with you for a rule to eternity, that every indulgence in any sin is a sure argument of an infidel: be you never so proud and confident of your faith, and justification by it; be you never so resolute that the "Lord liveth;" yet if your obedience be not uniform, if you embrace not what you assent to, "surely you swear falsely." Your particular failings I am not knowing enough to represent to you; your own consciences, if they be but called to, cannot choose but reflect them to your sight. Your outward profession and frequency in it, for the general is acknowledged; your custom of the place requires it of you; and the example of piety that rules in your eyes cannot but extort it. Only let your lives witness the sincerity of your professions; let not a dead carcass walk under a living head, and a nimble active Christian brain be supported with bed-rid, motionless heathen limbs. Let me see you move and walk, as well as breathe, that I may hope to see you saints as well as Christians.

And this shall be the sum, not only of my advice to you, but for you, of my prayers: that the Spirit would sanctify all our hearts as well as brains; that He will subdue, not only the pride and natural atheism of our understandings, but the rebellions, and infidelity, and heathenism of our lusts; that being purged from any relics, or tincture, or suspicion of irreligion in either power of our souls, we may live by faith, and move by love, and die in hope; and both in life and death glorify God here, and be glorified with Him hereafter.

SERMON XX.

LUKE xviii. 11.

God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men, extortioners, &c., or even as this publican.

THAT we may set out at our best advantage, and yet not go too far back to take our rise, it is but retiring to the end of the eighth verse of this chapter, and there we shall meet with an abrupt speech, hanging like one of Solomon's proverbs, without any seeming dependence on any thing before or after it: which yet upon enquiry will appear διοπετὴς, fallen down from heaven, in the posture it stands in. In the beginning of the eighth verse he concludes the former parable, "I tell you that He will avenge them speedily;" and then abruptly, "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith upon the earth?" And then immediately, verse 9, "He spake another parable to certain that trusted in themselves," where this speech in the midst, "when the Son of Man comes," &c., stands there by itself, like the Pharisee in my text, *seorsim*, apart, as an ἐμβόλιμον or intercalary day between two months, which neither of them will own, or more, truly like one of Democritus' atoms, the casual concurrence of which he accounted the principle and cause of all things. [Acts xix. 35.]

That we may not think so vulgarly of Scripture as to dream that any tittle of it came by resultance or casually into the world, that any speech dropped from His mouth unobserved, "that spake as man never spake," both in respect of the matter of His speeches, and the weight and secret energy of all accidents attending them, it will appear on consideration, that this speech of His, which seems an

ὑπερβάλλον or ὑπερβαῖνον, a supernumerary superfluous one, is indeed the head of the corner, and ground of the whole parable, or at least a fair hint or occasion of delivering it at that time. Not to trouble you with its influence on the parable going before concerning perseverance in prayer,—to which it is as an isthmus or fibula, to join it to what follows,—but to bring our eyes home to my present subject; after the consideration of the prodigious defect of faith in this decrepit last age of the world, in persons who made the greatest pretences to it, and had arrived unto assurance and security in themselves; He presently arraigns the Pharisee, the highest instance of this confidence, and brings his righteousness to the bar, *sub hac forma*.

There is like to be toward the second coming of Christ, His particular visitation of the Jews, and (then its parallel) His final coming to judgment, such a specious pompous show, and yet such a small pittance of true faith in the world, that as it is grown much less than a grain of mustard-seed, it shall not be found when it is sought; there will be such giantly shadows and pigmy substances, so much and yet so little faith, that no hieroglyphic can sufficiently express it, but an Egyptian temple gorgeously overlaid, inhabited within by crocodiles, and cats, and carcasses, instead of gods; or an apple of Sodom, that shews well till it be handled; a painted sepulchre, or a specious nothing; or which is the contraction and tachygraphy of all these, a Pharisee at his
ver. 9. prayers. And thereupon Christ spake the parable, "There were two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a
ver. 10. Pharisee," &c.

Concerning the true nature of faith, mistaken extremely now-a-days by those which pretend most to it, expulsed almost out of men's brains as well as hearts, so that now it is scarce to be found upon earth, either in our lives or almost in our books, there might be framed a seasonable complaint in this place, were I not already otherwise embarked. By some prepossessions and prejudices infused into us as soon as we can con a catechism of that making, it comes to pass that many men live and die resolved that faith is nothing but the assurance of the merits of Christ applied to every man particularly; and consequently of his salvation: that I must first

be sure of heaven, or else I am not capable of it; confident of my salvation, or else necessarily damned. Cornelius Agrippa being initiated in natural magic, Paracelsus in mineral extractions, Plato full of his ideas, will let nothing be done without the Pythagoreans, brought up with numbers perpetually in their ears, and the physicians poring daily upon the temperaments of the body; the one will define the soul an harmony, the other a *κράσις*, saith Philoponus. And so are many amongst us, that take up fancies upon trust for truths, never laying any contrary proposals to heart, come at last to account this assurance as a principle without which they can do nothing; the very soul that must animate all their obedience, which is otherwise but a carcass or heathen virtue; in a word, the only thing by which we are justified or saved. The confutation of this popular error I leave to some grave learned tongue, that may enforce it on you with some authority; for I conceive not any greater hindrance of Christian obedience and godly practice among us, than this: for as long as we are content with this assurance as sufficient stock to set up for heaven, there is like to be but little faith upon the earth. Faith, if it be truly so, is like Christ Himself, when He was Emmanuel, God upon the earth, *ἐνσαρκωθεῖσα*, an incarnate faith, cut out and squared into limbs and lineaments; not only a spiritual invisible faith, but even flesh and blood, to be seen and felt, organized for action; it is to speak, and breathe, and walk, and run the ways of God's commandments: an assent not only to the promises of the gospel, but uniformly to the whole word of God, commands and threats as well as promises. And this, not in the brain or surface of the soul, as the Romanist seats it, but in the heart, as regent of the hand and tongue in the concurrence of all the affections. Where it is not only a working faith, an obeying faith, but even a work, even obedience itself; not only a victorious faith, but even victory itself; "This is our victory, even our faith:" to part with this as a *πάρεργον*, which is our only business, is sure an unreasonable thesis. Any faith but this is a faith in the clouds, or in the air, the upper region of the soul, the brain; or at most but a piece of the heart; a magical faith, a piece of sorcery and conjuring; that will teach men to remove mountains, only by thinking they

Rom. i. 5; 1 John v. 4.

are able; but will never be taken by Christ for this faith upon the earth: if it do walk here, it is but as a ghost, it is even pity but it were laid. Let me beseech you meekly, but if this would not prevail, I would conjure you all in this behalf; the silly weak Christian to fly from this *μορμολύκειον*, and call for some light of their lawful pastors, to find out the deceit; and the more knowing illuminate Christian to examine sincerely and impartially by feeling and handling it throughly, whether there be any true substance in it or no. The Pharisee, looking upon himself superficially, thought he had gone on, on very good grounds, very unquestionable terms, that he was possessed of a very fair estate; he brought
ver. 12. in an inventory of a many precious works; "I fast, I tithe," &c.; hath no other liturgies but thanksgivings, no other sacrifice to bring into the temple, but eucharistical; and yet how foully the man was mistaken!

"God, I thank," &c.

The first thing I shall observe in the words is the *τὸ λογικὸν*, the rational importance of them, as they are part of a rhetorical syllogism, an example or parallel to shew that in the last days, though men think that there is a great deal, yet there is indeed like to be but little faith upon the earth. And the issue from thence is the Pharisee's flattering favourable misconceit of his own estate, and the parallel line to that, our premature deceivable persuasions of ourselves, that is ordinary among Christians.

The second thing is the *τὸ ῥητὸν*, the natural literal importance of the words, and therein the concomitants or effects of those his misconceits.

1. Pride, 2. Censoriousness. Pride noted by his speech, "I thank Thee that I am not;" then his posture, pluming up himself, "standing by himself he prayed;" as the Syriac set the words, and many Greek copies, some by making a comma after *πρὸς ἑαυτὸν*, others by reading *σταθεὶς καθ' ἑαυτὸν*, "standing by himself;" as Beza renders it, *seorsim*, "apart;" not as our English, he "stood and prayed thus with himself," but as the words will likewise bear it, "he stood by himself" thus; this posture signifying a proud contemptuous behaviour, whilst the publican stood crouching humbly and tremblingly behind.

2. Censoriousness and insinuating accusations of other men's persons, "even as this publican." To which we may add the occasion of all this, seeing the publican behind him, i. e. comparing himself with notorious sinners, he was thus proud and censorious.

And of these in their order, as powerfully and effectually to your hearts, as God shall enable me. And first of the first, the Pharisee's favourable misconceits of himself, and parallel to these, our deceivable persuasions of ourselves, "God, I thank," &c.

The black sin that hath dyed the Pharisee's soul so deep, as to become his characteristic inseparable property, a kind of agnomen, a perpetual accession to his name, is hypocrisy. The proper natural importance of which word signifies the personating or acting of a part, putting on another habit than doth properly belong to him. But by the liberty we ordinarily allow to words, to enlarge themselves sometimes beyond their own territories, to thrive and gain somewhat from their neighbours, it is come vulgarly to signify all that ambitious outside, or formality, the colour and varnish of religion, by which any man deceives either others or himself; and accordingly there is a twofold hypocrisy, the first, deceiving others; the second, himself. That by which he imposeth upon others is the sin we commonly declaim against, under that name, most fiercely, sometime by just reason, as having been circumvented by such glozes, sometime in a natural zeal to truth, preferring plain downright impiety, before the same transfigured by a varnish. *Reatus impii pium nomen*, his being counted innocent is an accession to his guilt. But then sometimes too, under this odious name we may wound sincere and pure devotion; as the primitive Christians were by the tyrants put in wild beasts' skins that they may be torn in pieces; men may be deterred from all the least appearance of purity, for fear they should be counted hypocrites. However this first sort of hypocrisy may deserve its seasonable reprehension, this parable in my text doth not take it in; but insists mainly upon the other, that colour of piety by which a man deceives himself, and cheats and glozes with his own soul. That first sort, were it not for some hurtful consequences, might for aught I can gainsay pass for an in-

nocent quality in a sinner. For what great injury doth that man do to any other, or himself? what grand sin against God or the world, by desiring to seem better than he is; by labouring to conceal those sins in himself, which could not be known without dishonour to God, and scandal to his neighbour? It was a lawyer's answer, being questioned whether it were lawful for a woman to take money for prostituting herself, that indeed it was a sin to prostitute herself; but that being supposed, as in some kingdoms it is permitted, he thought it was no great fault to get her living by it.

Not to justify his opinion, but apply it by accommodation: in like manner arraign an hypocrite, and muster up all the sins he hath committed in secret, and all these I will acknowledge worthy of condemnation, because sins: nay, if his end of concealing them be to circumvent a well-believing neighbour, that shall be set upon his score also; but for the desire itself of keeping his sin from the eyes of men, so that he do not from the eyes of God, and His ministers upon occasion, for a cautiousness in any one not to sin scandalously, or on the house-top, take this by itself, abstracted from the sin it belongs to, and I cannot see why that should be either a part or aggravation of a sin. There is nothing that deserves the tears, yea and holy indignation of a godly soul, more than the sight of an immodest boasting sinner, that makes his crimes his reputation, and his abominations his pride and glory. It is that which we lay to the devil's charge in the times of heathenism; that he strove to bring sin in credit by building temples, and requiring sacrifices to lust, under the name of Venus, Priapus, and the like; that incontinence might seem an act of religion, and all the profaneness in the world a piece of adoration. And it begins now to be revived in the world again, when bashfulness is the quality of all others most creditably parted with; and the only motive to the commission of some sins is, to be in the fashion, to be seen of men; when men put on affected errors, affected vanities, affected oaths, just as they do gay clothes, that they may be the better counted of: this indeed is a damnable hypocrisy, when men are fain to act parts in sin, that they are not naturally inclined to; and to force their constitutions, and even to offer violence to their own tender dispositions, that so they may

not be scoffed at for punies, or precise persons, as Augustus's daughter, which being admonished of a sin that beasts would never have committed, answered that that was the reason they omitted the enjoyment of so precious a delight, because they were beasts; as if innocence were more bestial than lust, and ignorance of some sins the only guilt. The horror and detestation that this sin strikes into me, makes me, I confess, willing almost to become an advocate of the first kind of hypocrisy, whereby men retain so much modesty in their sins (I hope of weakness) as to be willing to enjoy the charitable men's good opinion though undeserved.

But for the second kind of hypocrisy, this cozening of a man's own soul, this tiring and personating in the closet, this inventing of arts and stratagems to send himself comfortably and believingly to the devil, this civil intestine treachery within, and against one's-self; this is the grand imposture that here the Pharisee is noted for. An easiness and cheatableness that costs the bankrupting of many a jolly Christian soul. He, saith Plutarch [b], that wants health, let him go to the physicians, but he that wants *εὐεξία*, a good durable habit of body, let him go to the *γυμναστὰς*, "the masters of exercise," otherwise he shall never be able to confirm himself into a solid firm constant health, called thereupon by Hippocrates [c] *ἕξις ἀθλητικὴ*, "the constitution of wrestlers;" without which health itself is but a degree of sickness, nourishment proves but swellings, and not growth, but a tympany. Both these, saith he, philosophy will produce in the soul, not only teaching men *θεοὺς σέβεσθαι*,—where by the way he repeats almost the whole Decalogue of Moses, though in an heathen dialect,—to "worship the gods," &c., which is *ὑγίεια ψυχῆς*, "the health of the soul," but *τόδε μέγιστον*, that "which is above all," *μὴ περιχαρεῖς ὑπάρχειν μήτε ἐκλύτους*, "not to be overjoyed or immoderately affected in all this." This which he attributes to philosophy in general, is, saith Aristotle [d], an act of intellectual prudence, or sobriety, *μειζόνων ἢ ἄξιος ἑαυτὸν μὴ ἀξιοῦν*, "not to vouchsafe higher titles to himself than he is worthy of;" not to

[b] [De Liberis Educ., § 10. tom. i. pt. 1. p. 24. ed. Wyttenb.]

[c] [Aphorismi, tom. iii. p. 706; tom. xxiii. Med. Græci. ed. Kuhn.]

[d] [Nic. Eth. iv. 7.]

think himself in better health than he is, which is not the dialect of a mere heathen, but the very language of Canaan, *φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν*, the very word in Aristotle, which cannot be better expressed than by that *περίφρασις*, to have a moderate, sober, equal opinion of one's own gifts; not to overprize God's graces in ourselves, not to accept one's own person or give flattering titles to one's-self, in Job's phrase. This Chrysostom[e] calls *ταπεινοφροσύνη*, a word near kin unto the former, the meekness or lowliness of heart, *ὅταν τις*, κ.τ.λ., "when a man having attained to a great measure of grace, and done great matters by it, and knoweth it too," yet *μηδὲν μεγὰ*, "fancies no great matter of himself for all this." As the Three Children in Daniel having received a miracle of graces, which affected even the enemies of God, yet were not affected with it themselves; enabled to be martyrs, and yet live. Or as the poet of Callimachus[f] that stood after he was dead; *τί μ' ἔπεμπες ἐς ἀθανάτους πολεμιστὰς; βάλλομεν, οὐ πίπτουσι, τιτρώσκομεν, οὐ φοβέουσι*: which is Nebuchadnezzar's phrase, walking "in the midst of the fire and yet they have no hurt." Yet in their *εὐχαριστικὸν*, "their song of praise," all that they say of themselves is this, "and now we cannot open our mouths;" for this, saith Chrysostom, "we open our mouths that we may say this only, that it is not for us to open our mouths." By this low modest interpretation every Christian is to make of his own actions and gifts, you may guess somewhat of the Pharisee's misconceits.

Rom. xii. 3.

[Dan. iii. 25.]

Song of Three Children, ver. 10.

For first, were he never so holy and pure, of never so spiritual angelical composition, yet the very reflecting on these excellencies were enough to make a devil of him. The angels, saith Gerson[g], as the philosopher's intelligences, have a double habitude, two sorts of employments natural to them; one upwards, in an admiration of God's greatness, love of His beauty, obedience to His will, moving as it were a circular daily motion about God, their centre,—as Boethius[h] of them, *mentemque profundam circumeunt*;—another downward, of regiment and power in respect of all

[e] Tom. v. p. 261. [This reference is to Saville's edition; to a homily on the Pharisee and Publican, which is taken out of the fifth homily de Incomprehensibili Dei Naturâ, tom. i. p. 489, C. ed. Ben. where the passage will be found.]

[f] [Pantelius, ap. S. Maximum. Op., tom. ii. p. 543. Anthol. Palat., tom. iii. Append. Epigr. 58. ed. Jacobs.]

[g] Cf. Gerson. Tr. i. in Magnif.

[h] [See Consol. Philosophiæ, lib. iii. Metrum ix. v. 16. p. 223. ed. Delphin.]

below, which they govern and move and manage. Now if it be questioned, saith he, which of these two be more honourable,—for the credit of the angelical nature I determine confidently, that of subjection *pulchriorem et perfectiorem esse, quam secunda regitivæ dominationis,* "it is more renown to be under God than over all the world besides;" as the service to a king is the greatest preferment that even a peer of the realm is capable of. And then if an angel should make a song of exultance to set himself out in the greatest pomp, he would begin it as Mary doth her *Magnificat,* "For He hath regarded the low estate of His servant:" so that the blessed Virgin's mention of her own lowliness, was not a piece only of modest devotion, but an ὕψος of expression, and high metaphysical insinuation of the greatest dignity in the world. And then let the Pharisee be as righteous as himself can fancy, come to that pitch indeed which the contemptuous opinionative philosophers feigned to themselves, λέγοντες μὲν δεῖσθαι μηδενὸς, in Tatianus[i], which is in the Church of Laodicea's phrase, "I am rich, and am increased in spiritual wealth, and have need of nothing;" or the fools in the Gospel, "I have store laid up for many years;" nay, to St. Paul's pitch, rapt so high, that the schools do question whether he were *viator* or *comprehensor,* a traveller, or at his journey's end; yet the very opinion of God's graces would argue him a Pharisee; this conceiving well of his estate is the foulest misconceit. For if he be such a complete righteous person, so accomplished in all holy graces, why should he thus betray his soul, by depriving it of this ταπεινοφροσύνη, which the very heathens could observe so absolutely necessary; this humility and lowliness of mind, this useful and most ingenuous virtue always to think vilely of himself; not to acknowledge any excellence in himself, though he were even put upon the rack. The philosophers that wrote against pride, are censured to have spoiled all by putting their names to their books. Modesty, like Dinah[k], desiring never so little to be seen, is ravished. The sanctifying spirit that beautifies the soul, is an humbling spirit also, to make it unbeauteous

[Luke i. 48.]

Rev. iii. 17.

[Luke xvi. 19.]

[i] Contra Græcos, § 25. [p. 265, A. ad calcem. Op., S. Justini. Paris. 1742.]

[k] Gerson. Tr. 10. in Magnif. [Op., tom. iv. p. 468, B.]

in its own eyes. And this is the first misconceit, the first step in Pharisaical hypocrisy, thinking well of one's-self on what ground soever; contrary to that virgin grace, humility, which is a virtue required not only of notorious infamous sinners—for what thanks or commendation is it for him to be on the ground that hath fallen and bruised himself in his race? for him that is ready to starve, to go a begging?—but chiefly and mainly of him that is most righteous; when he that knows a great deal of good by himself, *μεγάλα κατορθώματα*[1], a great deal of good success in the spirit, yet *μηδὲν μέγα φαντάζεται*, is not advanced a whit at the fancy of all this.

The Pharisee's second misconceit is a favourable overprizing of his own worth, expecting a higher reward than it in proportion deserves. When looking in the glass he sees all far more glorious in that reflect beam than it is in the direct, all the deformities left in the glass, and nothing but fair returned to him, a rough harsh unpleasing voice smoothed, and softened, and grown harmonious in the echo: there is no such cheating in the world as by reflections. A looking-glass by shewing some handsome persons their good faces, and that truly, hath often ruined them by that truth, and betrayed that beauty to all the ugliness and rottenness in the world; which had it not been known by them, had been enjoyed. But then your false glasses, what mischief and ruin have they been authors of! how have they given authority to the deformedest creatures to come confidently on the stage, and befooled them to that shame which a knowledge of their own wants had certainly prevented! What difference there may be betwixt the direct species of a thing, and the same reflected, the original and the transcript, the artificial famous picture of Henry the Fourth of France will teach you; where in a multitude of feigned devices, a heap of painted, fantastical chimeras, which being looked on right resembled nothing, being ordered to cast their species upon a pillar of polished metal reflected to the spectator's eye the most lively visage of that famous king. He that hath not seen this piece of art, or hath not skill in catoptricks enough to understand the demonstrable grounds and reasons of it, may yet discern as much in nature, by the appearance of a

[1] S. Chrysost. [Hom. v. de Incompreh. Dei naturâ, tom. i. p. 489, C.]

rainbow, where you may see those colours reflected by the cloud, which no philosopher will assert to be existent there. And all this brings more evidence to the Pharisee's indictment, and demonstrates his opinion of his own actions or merits to be commonly deceivable and false.

He sees another man's actions *radio recto*, by a direct beam, and if there be no humour in his eye, if it be not glazed with contempt or envy, or prejudice, he may perhaps see them aright. But his own he cannot see but by reflection, as a man comes not to see his own eyes, but in the shadow, and at the rebound; whereupon Alcinous the Platonic, calls this act of the soul, *τῆς ψυχῆς πρὸς ἑαυτὴν διάλογον*, a dialogue of the soul with itself, and the knowledge that comes from thence, *ἀναζωγράφησιν*, a resemblance by shadowing. The soul understands, and wills its object; this act of it by its species is cast upon the fancy, and from thence, as even now from the column of brass, or bell-metal, it is reflected to the understanding: and then you may guess what a fair report he is likely to receive, when a Pharisee's fancy hath the returning of it. He that with his own clearest eyes could take a gnat for a taller unwieldier creature than a camel, and thereupon strains at it, what would he do if he should come to his multiplying glass! He that when he sees a mote, and that *radio recto*, in other's eyes, can mistake it for a beam, how can he, think you, improve the least atom of good, when he is to look on it in himself! How will his fancy and he, the one a cheat from the beginning, the other full greedy of the bait, fatten and puff up a sacrifice that he himself hath offered! O how fair shall it appear, and ready to devour all the seven fat ones, though it be the thinnest of Pharaoh's lean kine, lank and very ill favoured! How shall the reflection of his beggarliest rags return to his eye the picture of a king! and the ordinariest vapour, or cloud of his exhaling, be decked over with all the beauty and variety of the rainbow! What Aristotle[m] said of the Sophists, that they did *φυλετικῶς ἐμφυσᾶν ἑαυτοὺς*, though it be a puzzling place for the critics, this censor or Aristarchus in my text, will interpret by his practice; he blows up him-

Matt. xxiii. 24.

[m] [See Arist. Sophist. Elench. i. 1.]

self, as they were used to do their meat against a φυλετικὸν δεῖπνον[o], a tribune's or a sheriff's feast, that it may look the fairer, and not deceive others only, but himself; forgets what he has done, and now thinks it is his natural complexion: Wisd. xiii. as the carpenter in the thirteenth of Wisdom; that piece of wood which himself had just now carved into an idol, he presently prays to and worships as a god: or as liars, that by telling a tale often at last begin to believe themselves; so hath he befooled himself into a credulity: the farthing alms he hath given shall by a strange kind of usury (yet not stranger perhaps than what he deals in daily) be fancied into a mountain of gold, and the bare calves of their lips become hecatombs. If he have abstained from flesh when the market would yield none, or forborne to eat a supper ver. 12. after a notorious feast, he will call this "fasting twice in the week," and avouch himself an obedient abstemious subject and Christian, though Good Friday be witness of his unchristian epicurism. If he afford the minister the tenth of his house-rent, an annual benevolence far below that that his dues would come to, which by taking of a jolly fine at first, is for ever after pared into but a larger sort of quit-rents,—though his extortion bring in no revenue to any but the devil and himself,—he will yet be confident with the Pharisee, "I pay tithes of all that I possess."

A pittance of virtue in a Pharisee is like the polypod's head, to which Plutarch[p] compares poetry, hath some good, but as much or more ill in it also; sweet indeed and nutritive, saith he; and so is all virtue though simply moral, good wholesome diet for the soul, but withal ταρακτικὴ, it sends up vapours into the brain, and ends in whimseys and strange and troublesome dreams: the man fancies, I know not what, presently of himself; like learning in an ill-natured man, all about him are the worse for it; one moral virtue tires sometimes the whole vicinity of natural good-disposed gifts: it were well perhaps for his ingenuity and modesty that he were not so virtuous, that one drop of water being attenuated into air hath taken up all the room in the bladder: it were

[o] [Cf. Alexand. Aphrod. ad loc. in Schol. ed. Berl.]

[p] [Quomodo Adolescens Poetas audire debeat, § 1. p. 56. tom. i. pt. 1. ed. Wyttenb.]

as good for the heart to be shrivelled up, as thus distended, it must be squeezed again to make place for some more substantial guest, and be emptied quite, that it may be filled. In brief, it is the small measure, and this only of airy, empty piety, that hath puffed up the man. As they say a little critical learning makes one proud; if there were more it would condensate and compact itself into less room.

And generally the more there is within, the less report they give of themselves; as St. Matthew mentioning himself before his conversion, doth it distinctly, by the name of Matthew, and his trade sitting at the receipt of custom, "Matthew the publican," by that odious re-naming of sin,—whereas all the other Evangelists call him Levi, or the son of Alpheus,—but leaves out the story of his own feasting of Christ,—only "as Christ sat at meat in the house,"—which St. Luke sets down exactly, "and Levi made him a great feast," or as in the history of St. Peter's fall and repentance in the Gospel according to St. Mark;—which the primitive Church agree that St. Peter had a hand in it;—his denial is set down with all the aggravating circumstances, more than in all the rest put together, "he began to curse and swear, I know not this man of whom you speak:" two Evangelists say only, he denied him the third time; to this St. Matthew adds, "he cursed and sware, saying, I know not the man." But he in his own witness, most exactly in aggravating the sin, "I know not this," &c. But when he comes to the mention of his repentance, when the two other say, ἔκλαυσε πικρῶς, he himself, or St. Mark from him, only ἔκλαιε, he wept; always speaking as much bad and as little good of themselves as can be.

Matt. ix. 9. [Mark ii. 14; Luke v. 27.] Matt. ix. 10. Luke v. 29. Mark xiv. 71. [Luke xxii. 61; Matt. xxvi. 74.]

A little windy opinionative goodness distempers the empty brain, it is charity must ballast the heart; and that is the grace, according to holy Maximius' opinion[q], that all this while we have required, but not found in the Pharisee, and that is the reason that the brass sounds so shrill, and the cymbal tinkles so merrily. And this is the Pharisee's second misconceit, his overprizing his own good deeds and graces. The third is,

His opinion of the consistence and immutability of his

q [Cf. Centena Capita de Caritate, i. § 47, &c. Op., tom. i. p. 400.]

present estate, without any, either consideration of what he hath been, or fear what he may be again; he hath learnt or rather abused so much Scripture, as that the yesterday and the morrow must care for themselves; Prometheus or Epimetheus are profane heathen names to him; he is all in contemplation of present greatness; like the heathen gods, which are represented to have nothing to do but admire their own excellencies. "I thank God that I am not," &c. The Pharisee having a first-born's portion from the hand of God, will not be rude or importunate with Him for new and fresh supplies; nor will he disparage himself so much as to suspect the perpetuity of his enjoyment. *Καλὸς παρρησίας θησαυρὸς εὐγένεια*, saith Plutarch[r], "a man that is honourably and freely born hath a fair treasure of confidence," and so a natural advantage of other men; but bastards and men of a cracked race, *ὑπόχαλκον καὶ κίβδηλον ἔχοντες γένος*, that have a "great deal of copper or dross mixed" with their or and argent, *ταπεινοῦσθαι πέφυκε*, "these men are born to be humble" and shamefaced. But amongst these contemplations he may do well to consider the Amorite his father, and his mother the Hittite, the pollutions and blood he was clothed with in the day that he was born, the accursed inheritance as well of shame as sin derived unto him. For then certainly he would never so plume himself in his present sunshine. If he have not gotten in the *ὑπόκαυστον*, among the Adamites in Epiphanius[s], and there set up for one of Adam's sect before his fall, or the Valentinians[t] which called themselves the spirituals, and the seed of Abel, who indeed never had any natural seed we hear of. If he will but grant himself of the ordinary composition and race of men, come down from Adam either by Cain or Seth, I am sure he shall find sins past enough either in his person or nature to humble him, be he never so spiritual. And then for the time to come, Christ certainly was never so espoused to any soul, as to be bound to hold it for better for worse. That if he find aught in that spouse contrary to the vow of wedlock, he can *ἀποπέμπειν*[u],—the word used in divorces

Ezek. xvi. [3, sq.]

[r] [De Liberis Educandis, § 2.]

[s] [Epiphan., lib. ii. Hæresis 32. Op., tom. i. p. 438.]

[t] Id., lib. i. Hær. 31. § 23. Op., tom. i. p. 192, B, C, sq.]

[u] [Cf. e.g. Demosth., p. 1362. 25.]

amongst the Athenians on the husband's part,—send the soul out of his house or temple; especially if she do ἀπολείπειν,—the phrase used on the woman's part,—if she leave or forsake the husband, if she draw back or subduce herself out of his house, "by an evil heart of unbelief, openly depart from the living God." It is observed by the critics as an absurd ridiculous phrase in some authors, to call the emperors *divi* in their life-time, which, saith Rittershusius, when the propriety of the Roman tongue was observed, *capitale fuisset*, had been a grand capital crime. And as absurd no doubt is many men's ἀποθέωσις and ἀπαθανατισμὸς, their canonizing, securing and besainting themselves in this life, upon every slight premature persuasion that they are in Christ. That which Aphrodisius[v] on the Topics observes of the leaves of trees, may perhaps be too true of the spiritual estate and condition of men, that the vine, and fig, and plane tree, which have thin broad leaves, and make the fairest show, φυλλορροοῦσι, do thereupon shed them presently: some few indeed, the olive, bay, and myrtle, which have narrow solid leaves, are able to keep them all the year long, ἀείφυλλα and ἀειθαλῆ, always green and flourishing. And God grant such laurels may for ever abound in this paradise, this garden of the land; that the children of this mother may environ her like olive plants round about her table; this perhaps you will count an high thing, to shed the leaf, but what think you of extirpation and rooting up? even this you shall hear denounced, and executed on those that cast a fair shadow, either as on degenerous or unprofitable trees; either for bad fruit, or none at all, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?"

Heb. x. 8. Heb. iii. 12. [Luke xiii. 7.]

But to our purpose; when St. Paul therefore resolves that nothing should "ever separate him from the love of God," sin is there left out of the catalogue; be he never so possessed of that inheritance, for aught he knows this very confidence may root him out again. His brethren the Jews thought their estate as irreversible as the Pharisee's here; and upon as good grounds as he can pretend; the very promise of God to Abraham's seed indefinitely; and yet by that time this parable was spoken, they can bring him word of

Rom. viii. [39.]

[v] Alex. Aphrod. in Top. Arist. [f. 63. Aldus.]

the repeal of that promise, within a while sealed and confirmed by their *πανωλεθρία*, their instant utter destruction; a forerunner of which, if not the cause, was this confidence of their immutable estate.

It was a fancy of the Stoics mentioned by Plutarch[x], *περὶ πάντα κατορθοῦν τὸν ἀστεῖον*, that a "wise man could do nothing amiss," that all that he did was wise and virtuous. And they that will have men saved and damned by a stoical necessity, now-a-days, may borrow this fancy of the Stoics also; but Homer, saith he, and Euripides long since exploded it. I am sure St. Paul will fairly give any man leave that takes himself to be in a good estate now, to fear a bad before he die; to expect a tempest in a calm; or else he would not have been so earnest with him that "thinks he stands, to take heed lest he fall." It was the confidence of a Turk, i. e. a Stoic revived, in Nicetas Chon., that said he knew they must overcome, on now for ever, as having got *ἕξιν τοῦ νικᾶν*, an "habit of conquering:" and it was well if this assurance did not take the pains to lose it him again. It is the rhetoric of discreet captains to their soldiers in Thucydides[y], and other historians, to exhort them to fight on comfortably and courageously, as having overcome, in remembrance of their past victories as pawns and pledges of the future: but it is always on condition and presumptions of the same diligence and valour which formerly they shewed. And the same military encouragements and munition the fathers frequently furnish us with against our spiritual warfare, but all rather to increase our diligence than security, to set us to work on hope of success, not to nourish us in idleness in hope of a victory. If we should suffer the devil from this proposition, "he will give His angels charge" that a child "of His shall not dash his foot against a stone," and then that assumption, thou art the child of God, to conclude that thou canst not hurt thyself with a fall, he would straight back that with a *mitte te deorsum*, "Cast thyself down," to shew what thou canst do; and then if thou hast not another *scriptum est* to rejoinder, thou "shalt not tempt,"—then this confidence is tempting of God,—I know not how thou wilt be able to

1 Cor. x. 12.

[Matt. iv. 6.]

[x] [De Audiend. Poetis, tom. vi. p. 89. Reiske.]
[y] [Cf. e.g. Thucyd. ii. 89; vii. 66.]

escape a precipice, a bruise if not a breaking. The Valentinian having resolved himself to be πνευματικὸς[z], "spiritual," confessed indeed that other men must get some store of faith and works to help them to heaven, ἑαυτὸν δὲ μὴ δεῖσθαι διὰ τὸ φύσει πνευματικὸν εἶναι. "But they had no need of either, because of their natural spiritualness;" that which is spiritual cannot part with its spiritual hypostasis whatever it do or suffer; no more than gold by a sink can lose its lustre; or the sunbeams be defamed by the dunghill they shine on. They commit all manner of impurity, saith he, and yet they are σπέρματα ἐκλογῆς, "seeds of the election;" the seeds indeed, deep set in the earth, that take root downward, but never bear fruit upward; they never spring at all except it be towards hell; nor sprout out any branch or stalk of works, unless it be of darkness. These forsooth have grace ἰδιόκτητον, as their "proper possessions," all others but to use, and so it seemed, for they of all others made no use of it. There was another like fancy in the same Irenæus[a], of Marcus and his followers, that by the ἀπολύτρωσις, a form of baptizing that they had, that they were become ἀόρατοι τῷ κριτῇ, "invisible to the judge," then if ever they were apprehended it were but calling to the Mother of Heaven, and she would send the helmet in Homer, that they should presently vanish out of their hands. Thus have men been befooled by the devil to believe that their sacred persons could excuse the foulest acts, and as it was said of Cato, even "make crimes innocent;" thus have some gotten the art of sinning securely, nay, religiously, as he that in our English history would put his neighbours in a course to rebel legally. But I hope all these fancies have nothing to do but fill up the catalogues in Irenæus and Epiphanius; I trust they shall never be able to transplant themselves into our brains or hearts. But pray God there be no credence of them scattered here and there among hasty, ignorant, overweening Christians. A man shall sometimes meet abroad some reason to suspect it, yet it were pity to fear so far as to set to confute them. There may be indeed a state and condition of Christians, so well settled and rivetted by Christ

[z] [S. Irenæus adv. Hær., lib. i. c. 6. Op. tom. i. p. 29. αὐτοὺς δὲ μὴ διὰ πράξεως, ἀλλὰ διὰ τὸ φύσει πνευματικοὺς εἶναι.]

[a] [Id., lib. i. c. xiii. ibid. p. 64.]

in grace, that their estate may be comfortably believed immutable, an election under oath, perhaps that mentioned by the Psalmist, "I have sworn by My holiness, I will not fail David;" for spiritual blessings are frequently in Scripture conveyed along with temporal. But it is much to be doubted, that those men that have boldness to believe this of themselves, have not ballast enough of humility and fear to make it good. Porphyry had so much divinity in him as to observe that καθάρσια were the only ἀποτρόπαια[a], that perpetual washings, and purgings and lustrations, were the only means to defend or deliver from evil, either to come or present; the only amulets and ἀλεξίκακα in the world; it is the rainbow in the heaven reflected thither from a cloud of tears below, that is, God's engagement never again to drown the earth. But then there must be also another bow in the heart, that must promise for that, that it shall not be like a deceitful bow, go back again to folly, never again be drowned with swinish, bestial, filthy lusts. In the 17th of Exodus the Israelites prevailed against Amalek, and that miraculously without any sensible means; and verse 16 the promise is made for the future, that the "Lord will fight with Amalek for ever;" where by the way the LXX. put in ἐν κρυφαίᾳ χειρὶ, "God will fight against Amalek as it were underhand," by secret hidden strength; which addition of theirs —if it were inspired into the translators, as St. Augustin[b] is of opinion, all their variations from the Hebrew are θεόπνευστα, and so Canon—then happily that κρυφαία χεὶρ may signify some secret infusion of supernatural power into Moses' hands; that there is promised, answerable to that same effusion of grace, to enable all the people of God in our fight with sin, the spiritual Amalek, by which grace Moses and the Christians have assurance to prevail. And this may be ground enough for a Christian; Christ hath prayed, and God promised that "your faith shall not fail." But then all this while the story of the day will tell us on what terms this security of victory stood, if so be Moses continue to hold up his hands; noting 1. the power of prayer; 2. of obedience; 3. of perseverance; and upon these terms even a Pharisee

[Psalm lxxxix. 34.]

Exod. xvii. [17.]

ver. 16.

[Luke xxii. 32.]

[a] [De Abstin., lib. ii. § 44.]
[b] [De Civit. Dei, xviii. c. 43. Op., tom. vii. p. 525.]

may be confident without presumption; but if his hands be once let down; if he remit of his Christian valour—for so *manus demittere* signifies in agonistics—"Amalek prevails." Just as it fared with Samson, he had an inconceivable portion of strength, even a ray of God's omnipotence bestowed on him, but this not upon term of life, but of his Nazarite's vow, i. e. as the LXXII. render it, εὐχὴ ἁφαγνίσασθαι ἁγνείαν Κυρίῳ, "a prayer as well as a vow;" and that of separating or "hallowing purity and sanctity to the Lord;" and his vow being broken, not only that of his hair, but with it that of his holy obedience, that piece of divinity presently vanished, and the Philistines deprived him of his eyes and life. And thereupon it is observable that which is in the Hebrew in performing a vow, is rendered by the LXXII. μεγαλῦναι τὴν εὐχὴν, "to magnify a vow," then is the vow or resolution truly great that will stand us in stead when it is performed. As for all others they remain as brands and monuments of reproach to us; upbraiding us of our inconstancy first, then of disobedience; and withal as signs to warn that God's strength is departed from us. I doubt not but this strength being thus lost, may return again before our death, giving a plunge, as it did in Samson when he plucked the house about their ears at last. But this must be by the growing out of the hair again, the renewing of his repentance and sanctity with his vow, and by prayer unto God, "Lord God," or as the LXXII., Κύριε, Κύριε δυνάμεων, "Remember me, I pray Thee, and strengthen me," but for all this, it was said before in the 19th verse, his "strength," and in the 20th verse, the "Lord was departed from him." And so no doubt it may from us, if we have no better security for ourselves than the present possession, and a dream of perpetuity. For though no man can excommunicate himself by one rule, yet he may by another, in the canon law; that there be some faults excommunicate a man *ipso facto;* one who hath committed them, the law excommunicates, though the judge do not; you need not the application; there be perhaps some sins and devils like the Carian scorpions which Apollonius and Antigonus[c] mention out of Aristotle[c], which when they strike strangers, do

Exod. xvii. 11.

Numb. vi. 2.

Numb. xv. 9.

Judg. xvi. ver. 22. ver. 21. ver. 19. ver. 20.

[c] [Antigonus, Hist. Mirab. c. 18. Apollonius, Hist. Comment., c. xi. ap. Meursium, Op., tom. vii. p. 13. ibid., p. 157.]

them no great hurt, ἐπιχωρίους δὲ αὐτίκα ἀποκτείνουσι, "presently kill their own countrymen;" some devils perhaps that have power to hurt only their own subjects; as sins of weakness and ignorance, though they are enough to condemn an unregenerate man, yet we hope, through the merits of Christ into whom he is ingrafted, οὐ λίαν ἀδικοῦσι πατάξαντες, "shall do little hurt to the regenerate," unless it be only to keep him humble, to cost him more sighs and prayers. But then, saith the same Apollonius [d] there, your Babylonian snakes that are quite contrary, do no great hurt to their own countrymen, but are present death to strangers; and of this number it is to be feared may presumption prove, and spiritual pride; sins that the ἐπιχώριοι, the devil's natives, ordinary habitual sinners need not much to fear; but to the stranger, and him that is come from afar, thinking himself, as St. Paul was, dropped out of the third heaven, and therefore far enough from the infernal country, it is to be feared I say, they may do much mischief to them. And therefore as Porphyry [e] says of Plotinus in his life, and that for his commendation, that he was not ashamed to suck when he was eight years old, but as he went to the schools frequently diverted to his nurse; so will it concern us for the getting of a consistent firm habit of soul, not to give over the nurse when we are come to age and years in the spirit, to account ourselves babes in our virility, and be perpetually a calling for the dug, the "sincere milk of the word," of the sacraments, of the Spirit, and that without any coyness or shame, be we in our own conceits, nay, in the truth, never so perfect, full-grown men in Christ Jesus.

[2 Cor. xii. 2.]

[1 Pet. ii. 2.]

And so much be spoken of the first point proposed, the Pharisee's flattering misconceit of his own estate; and therein implicitly of the Christian's premature deceivable persuasions of himself; 1. thinking well of one's-self on what grounds soever; 2. overprizing of his own worth and graces; 3. his opinion of the consistency and immutability of his condition, without either thought of what is past, or fear of what is to come. Many other misconceits may be observed, if not in the Pharisee, yet in his parallel the ordinary confident Christian; as 1. that God's decree of election is terminated in their

[d] Cap. 12. [ibid.]

[e] [In vita Plotini, § 3.]

particular and individual entities, without any respect to their qualifications and demeanours: 2. that all Christian faith is nothing but assurance, a thing which I touched ἐν παρέργῳ, in the preface, and can scarce forbear now I meet with it again: 3. that the gospel consists all of promises of what Christ will work in us, no whit of precepts or prohibitions: 4. that it is a state of ease altogether and liberty, no whit of labour and subjection; but the Pharisee would take it ill if we should digress thus far, and make him wait for us again at our return. We hasten therefore to the second part, the τὸ ῥητὸν, or natural importance of the words, and there we shall find him standing apart, and thanking God only perhaps in compliment; his posture and language give notice of his pride, the next thing to be touched upon.

Pride is a vice either 1. in our natures, 2. in our educations, or 3. taken upon us for some ends: the first is a disease of the soul, which we are inclined to by nature; but actuated by a full diet, and inflation of the soul, through taking in of knowledge, virtue, or the like; which is intended indeed for nourishment for the soul, but through some vice in the digestive faculty, turns all into air and vapours, and windiness, whereby the soul is not fed but distended, and not filled but troubled, and even tortured out of itself. To this first kind of pride may be accommodate many of the old fancies of the poets and philosophers, the giants fighting with God, i. e. the ambitious daring approaches of the soul toward the unapproachable light, which cost the angels so dear, and all mankind in Eve, when she ventured to taste of the tree of knowledge. Then the fancy of the heathens mentioned by Athenagoras[f], that the souls of those giants were devils; that it is the devil indeed, that old serpent, that did in Adam's time, and doth since animate and actuate this proud soul, and set it a moving. And Philoponus[g] saith that winds and tumours, i. e. lusts and passions, those troublesome impressions in the soul of man, are the acceptablest sacrifices, the highest feeding to the devils; nay, to the very damned in hell, who rejoice as heartily to hear of the con-

[f] [Legat. pro Christianis, p. 303. C. (ad calcem op. S. Justini.)]

[g] [Refers probably to Philoponus, Comment. in Aristot. de Animâ præf. prope fin.]

version of one virtuous, or learned man to the devil, of such a brave proselyte, I had almost said, as the angels in heaven at the repentance and conversion of a sinner. This is enough I hope to make you keep down this boiling and tumultuousness of the soul, lest it make you either a prey, or else companions for devils; and that is but a hard choice, nay, a man had far better be their food than their associates, for then there might be some end hoped for by being devoured; but that they have a villainous quality in their feeding, they bite perpetually but never swallow, all jaws and teeth, but neither throats nor stomachs; which is noted perhaps by that phrase in the Psalmist, "Death gnaweth upon the wicked;" is perpetually a gnawing, but never devours or puts over.

[Ps. xlix. 14.]

Pride in our education is a kind of tenderness and chillness in the soul, that some people by perpetual softness are brought up to, that makes them uncapable and impatient of any corporal or spiritual hardness; a squeasiness and rising up of the heart against any mean, vulgar or mechanical condition of men; abhorring the foul clothes and rags of a beggar, as of some venomous beast: and consequently as supercilious and contemptuous of any piece of God's service, which may not stand with their ease and state, as a starched gallant is of any thing that may disorder his dress. Thus are many brought up in this city to a loathing and detestation of many Christian duties, of alms-deeds, and instructing their families in points of religion; of visiting and comforting the sick, nay, even of the service of God, if they may not keep their state there; but specially of the public prayers of the Church, nothing so vulgar and contemptible in their eyes as that. But I spare you, and the Lord in mercy do so also.

The third kind of pride is a supercilious affected haughtiness, that men perhaps meekly enough disposed by nature, are fain to take upon them for some ends, a solemn censorious majestic garb, that may entitle them to be patriots of such or such a faction; to gain a good opinion with some, whose good opinion may be their gain. Thus was Mahomet fain to take upon him to be a prophet, and pretend that it was discoursing with the angel Gabriel made him in that case, that his new wife might not know that he was epileptical, and so

repent of her match with a beggar, and a diseased person. And upon these terms Turkism first came into the world, and Mahomet was cried up μέγιστος προφήτης, the greatest prophet, (to omit other witness,) as the Saracen fragments tell us, that we have out of Euthymius. Thus are imperfections and wants, sometimes even diseases, both of body and mind, assumed and affected by some men to get authority to their persons, and an opinion of extraordinary religion; but rather perhaps more oil to their cruse, or custom to their trading. But not to flutter thus at large any longer, or pursue the commonplace in its latitude, the Pharisee's pride here expresseth itself in three things; 1. his posture, standing apart; 2. his manner of praying altogether by way of thanksgiving; 3. his malicious contemptuous eye upon the publican. The first of these may be aggravated against the schismatic that separates from the Church, or customs, but especially service and prayers of the Church. It is pride certainly that makes this man set himself thus apart, whereas the very first sight of that holy place strikes the humble publican upon the knees of his heart afar off; as soon as he was crept within the gates of the temple, he is more devout in the porch than the Pharisee before the altar. The second, against those that come to God in the pomp of their souls, commending themselves to God, as we ordinarily use the phrase, commending indeed not to His mercy, but acceptance; not as objects of His pity, but as rich spiritual presents; not tears to be received into His bottle, but jewels for His treasure. Always upon terms of spiritual exultancy, what great things God hath done for their souls; how He hath fitted them for Himself; never with humble bended knees in acknowledgment of unworthiness with St. Paul, who cannot name that word, sinners, but most straight subsume in a parenthesis, of "whom I am the chief." And for the expression of the opinion he had of his own sanctity, is fain to coin a word for the purpose, ἐλαχιστότερος, a word not to be met with in all Greek authors again before he used it, "less than the least of the saints." And Jacob in a like phrase, "I am less than all Thy mercies." The Litany that begins and ends with so many repetitions importuning for mercy, even conjuring God by all powerful names of rich

1 Tim. i. 15.

Eph. iii. 8.

Gen. xxxii. 10.

mercy that can be taken out of His exchequer, to "have mercy upon us miserable sinners," this is set aside for the publican,—the sinner's liturgy,—nay as some say, for the profane people only, not to pray but to swear by. But this only as *in transitu*, not to insist on. The third expression of his pride is his malicious sullen eye upon the publican, and that brings me to the next thing proposed at first, the Pharisee's censoriousness and insinuated accusations of all others. "I am not as other men, extortioners, &c. . . . . or even as this publican."

It were an ingenious speculation, and that which would stand us in some stead in our spiritual warfare, to observe what hints and opportunities the devil takes from men's natural inclinations to insinuate and ingratiate his temptations to them; how he applies still the fuel to the fire, the nourishment to the craving stomach; and accommodates all his proposals most seasonably and suitably to our affections; not to enlarge this *καθόλου*, in the gross, nor yet *καθέκαστον*, to each particular, you may have a *δεῖξις* or taste of it in the Pharisee.

To an easy-natured man whose soul is relaxed, and has its pores open to receive any infection or taint, the devil presents a multitude of adulterers, drunkards, &c., thereby to distil the poison softly into him; to sweeten the sin and secure him in the commission of it, by store of companions: but to a Pharisee,—rugged, singular, supercilious person,—he proposeth the same object under another colour. The many adulterers, &c., that are in the world, not to entice, but to incense him the more against the sin; not to his imitation, but to his spleen and hatred: that seeing he can hope to gain nothing upon him by bringing him in love with their sin, he may yet inveigle him by bringing him in hatred with their persons; and plunge him deeper through uncharitableness, than he could hope to do by lust. He knows well the Pharisee's constitution is too austere to be caught with an ordinary bait, and therefore puts off his title of Beelzebub, prince of flies, as seeing that they are not now for his game; but trolls and baits him with a nobler prey, and comes in the person of a Cato or Aristarchus, a severe disciplinarian, a grave censor, or, as his most satanical name imports, *διάβολος*, an accuser,

and then the Pharisee bites presently. He could not expect to allure him forward, and therefore drives him as far back as he can; that so he may be the more sure of him at the rebound; as a skilful woodsman, that by windlassing presently gets a shoot, which, without taking a compass and thereby a commodious stand, he could never have obtained. The bare open visage of sin is not lovely enough to catch the Pharisee, it must be varnished over with a show of piety; with a colour of zeal and tenderness in God's cause, and then, the very devilishest part of the devil, his malice and uncharitableness, shall go down smoothly with him. And that this stratagem may not be thought proper to the meridian only where the Pharisee lived, Leo[j] within five hundred years after Christ, and other of the fathers, have observed the same frequently practised by the devil among the primitive Christians; *ut quos vincere flamma ferroque non poterat, ambitione inflaret, virus invidiæ infunderet, et sub falsa Christiani nominis professione corrumperet:* that they whom persecution could not affright, ambition may puff up, envy poison, and a false opinion of their own Christian purity betray to all the malice in the world. Thus have heretics and sectaries, in all ages, by appropriating to themselves those titles that are common to all the children of God, left none for any other, but of contumely and contempt: as soon as they fancy to themselves a part of the spirit of God, taken upon them the monopoly of it also. Thus could not the Valentinians[k] be content to be πνευματικοὶ themselves; but all the world beside must be ψυχικὸς and χωϊκὸς, animal and earthly. It were long to reckon up to you the idioms and characters that heretics have usurped to themselves in opposition and reproach, and even defiance of all others; the Pharisee's *separati*, Sadducee's *justi*, Novatian's καθαροὶ, *puri*, Messalian's *precantes*. As if these several virtues, separation from the world, love of justice, purity, daily exercise of prayer, were nowhere to be found but amongst them. Even that judicious, learned, eloquent, yea and godly father Tertullian[l], is caught in this pitfall; as soon as he began to relish Montanus's heresy, he straight changeth his style,

[j] S. Leo Magn. [cf. supr. p. 406.] ch. vi.]
[k] [S. Irenæus cont. Hæres., lib. i. [l] [Tertull. De Jejun. ad init.]

nos spirituales, and all other orthodox Christians *psychici*, animal, carnal men. The devil could not be content that he had gained him to Montanism,—an heresy which it is confessed only a superlative care of chastity, abstinence, and martyrdom, brought him to,—but he must rob him of his charity too, as well as his religion. Not to keep any longer on the wing in pursuit of this censorious humour in the Pharisee and primitive heretics, the present temper and constitution of the Church of God will afford us plenty of observation to this purpose. Amongst other crimes with which the Reformation charge the Romanists, what is there that we so importunately require of them as their charity! that seeing with the apostolical seat they have seized upon the keys of heaven also, they would not use this power of theirs so intemperately, as to admit none but their own proselytes into those gates, which Christ hath opened to all believers. For this cause, saith Eulogius[m] in Photius, were the keys given to Peter, not to John or any other, because Christ foresaw Peter would deny Him, that so by the memory of his own failings, he might learn humanity to sinners, and be more free of opening the gates of heaven, because he himself,—had it not been for special mercy,—had been excluded; other Apostles, saith he, having never fallen so foully, *τάχα ἂν ἀποτομώτερον αὐτοῖς διεκέχρηντο*, "might like enough have used sinners more sharply:" but it was not probable that Peter would be such a severe Cato; and yet there is not more unmerciful man under heaven than he that now tyrannizeth in his chair. Spalatensis indeed, after his revolt from us, could ingeniously confess, that he could have expected comfortably, and perhaps have been better pleased, to have been saved in the Church of England, with a thousand pound a year, as in the Roman with five hundred pound. But do not all others of them count this no less than heresy in him thus to hope? Cudsemius[n] the Jesuit denies the English

[m] [ὅτι διὰ τοῦτο, φησὶν, οὔτε πρὸς Ἰωάννην, οὔτε πρὸς ἕτερόν τινα τῶν μαθητῶν ἔφη ὁ σωτὴρ τό· καὶ δώσω σοι τὰς κλεῖς τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν, καὶ τὰ ἑξῆς· ἀλλ' ἢ πρὸς Πέτρον, ὃς ἔμελλε τῷ τῆς ἀρνήσεως περιπίπτειν ὀλισθήματι, καὶ διὰ δακρύων καὶ μετανοίας ἀπονίπτειν τὸ ἁμάρτημα, ἵνα τῷ καθ' ἑαυτὸν ὑποδείγματι πρὸς τοὺς ἐξαμαρτάνοντας φιλανθρωπότερον διατίθοιτο· οἱ γὰρ ἄλλοι ἀπείραστοι γεγενημένοι, τάχα ἂν ἀποτομώτερον αὐτοῖς διεκέχρηντο.—Eulogius ap. Photium, Biblioth., p. 1600. ed. Hoeschel.]

[n] [De desperata Calvini Causa, lib. i. c. 11.]

nation to be heretics, because they remain under a continual succession of bishops. But alas! how few be there of them, which have so much charity to afford us! What fulminations and clattering of clouds is there to be heard in that horizon! What anathematizing of heretics, i. e. Protestants! what excommunicating them without any mercy, first out of the Church, then out of the book of life; and lastly, where they have power, out of the land of the living! And yet, would they be as liberal to us poor Protestants, as they are to their own stews and seminaries of all uncleanness, then should we be stored with indulgences. But it was Tertullian's[o] of old, that there is no mercy from them to be expected, who have no crime to lay against us but that we are true Christians. If they would but allow one corner of heaven to receive penitent humble Protestants, labouring for good works, but depending on Christ's merit; if they would not think us past hopes, or prayers, there might be possibly hoped some means of uniting us all in one fold. But this precious Christian grace of charity being now so quite perished from off the earth, what means have we left us, but our prayers, to prepare or mature this reconciliation? Shall we then take heart also, and bring in our action of trespass? Shall we sit and pen our railing accusation in the form that Christ uses against the Pharisees, "Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, for you neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in?" This we might do upon better grounds, were we so revengefully disposed; but we fear to incur our Saviour's censure, "And He turned and rebuked them, saying, Ye know not what manner of spirits ye are of." We should much mistake our Christian spirit, if we should not in return to their curses, intercede with God in prayer for them; first, that He will bestow on them the grace of meekness or charity; then, sincerity and uprightness, without wilful blindness and partiality; and lastly, to intercede for the salvation of all our souls together. And this is the only way St. Paul hath left us, "by returning them good to melt them," hoping and pray-

Matt. xxiii. 13.

Luke ix. 55.

Rom. xii. 20.

[o] [Cf. Tertull. Apoll., c. 2.]

[Prov. xxv. 15.] ing in the words of Solomon, that by long forbearing this great Prince of the West will be persuaded; and that our soft tongues may in time break the bone. But whilst we preach charity to them, shall we not betray partiality in ourselves, by passing over that uncharitable fire that is breaking out in our own chimneys? It were to be wished that this Christian grace, which is liberal enough of itself, would be entertained as gratefully as it is preached; we should not then have so many בני אש, "sons of fire" amongst us as we have; who being inflamed, some with faction, others with ignorant prejudice, others with doting on their own abilities, fall out into all manner of intemperate censures, דברי חרב, "words of the sword," all sharp contumelious invectives against all persons, or doctrines, or lives that are not ordered or revised by them. For what Photius[p] out of Josephus observes among others to have been one main cause or prognostic of the destruction of Jerusalem, the civil wars betwixt the ζηλωταὶ and the σικάριοι, the zealots and the cut-throats, pray God we find not the same success amongst us. Whilst the zealots, saith he, fell on the sicarii, the whole body of the city, πικρῶς καὶ ἀνηλεῶς ἐσπαράττετο, "was bitterly and unmercifully butchered betwixt them;" and under one of those two names all the people were brought to suffer their part in the massacre. I desire not to chill or damp you with unnecessary fears, or to suspect that our sins shall be so unlimited as utterly to outvie and overreach God's mercies. But, beloved, this ill blood that is generally nourished amongst us, if it be not a prognostic of our fate, is yet an ill symptom of our disease. These convulsions and distortions of one member of the body from another as far as it can possibly be distended, this burning heat, and from thence raving and disquietness of the soul, are certainly no very comfortable symptoms. When the Church and kingdom must be dichotomized, precisely divided into two extreme parts, and all moderate persons by each extreme tossed to the other with furious prejudice; must brand all for heretics or carnal persons that will not undergo their razor; and then, the contrary extreme, censure and scoff at their preciseness that will not bear them company to every kind of riot; these, beloved,

[p] [Biblioth., p. 36. ed. Hoeschel.]

are shrewd feverish distempers, pray God they break not forth into a flame. When the boat that goes calmly with the stream, in the midst of two impetuous rowers, shall be assaulted by each of them, for opposing or affronting each; when the moderate Christian shall be branded on the one hand for preciseness, on the other for intemperance, on the one side for a puritan, on the other for a papist, or a remonstrant; when he that keeps himself from either extreme, shall yet be entitled to both; what shall we say is become of that ancient primitive charity and moderation? The use, beloved, that I desire to make of all this, shall not be to declaim at either; but only by this compass to find out the true point that we must fail by. By this, saith Aristotle[q], you shall know the golden mediocrity, that it is complained on both sides, as if it were both extremes; that may you define to be exact liberality, which the covetous man censures for prodigality, and the prodigal for covetousness. And this shall be the sum not only of my advice to you, but prayers for you; that in the Apostle's phrase, "your moderation may be known unto all men," by this livery and cognizance, that you are indited by both extremes. And if there be any such Satanical art crept in amongst us, of authorizing errors or sins on one side, by pretending zeal and earnestness against their contraries; as Photius[r] observes that it was a trick of propagating heresies, by writing books entitled to the confutation of some other heresy; the Lord grant that this evil spirit may be either laid or cast out; either fairly led, or violently hurried out of our coasts.

Phil. iv. 5.

I have done with the Pharisee's censoriousness; I come now in the last place to the ground, or rather occasion of it; his seeing the publican,—comparing himself with notorious sinners; "I thank Thee that," &c.

That verse which St. Paul cites out of Menander's Thais, that "wicked communication corrupts good manners," is grounded on this moral essay, that nothing raiseth up so much to good and great designs as emulation; that he that casts himself upon such low company, that he hath nothing to imitate or aspire to in them, is easily persuaded to give

1 Cor. xv. 33.

q Eth. ii. 7.

r [Biblioth., p. 399. ad med.; and p. 259. ad fin.]

over any further pursuit of virtue, as believing that he hath enough already, because none of his acquaintance hath any more: thus have many good wits been cast away, by falling unluckily into bad times, which could yield them no hints for invention, no examples of poetry, nor encouragement for any thing that was extraordinary. And this is the Pharisee's fate in my text, that looking upon himself, either in the deceivable glass of the sinful world, or in comparison with notorious sinners, extortioners, adulterers, publicans, sets himself off by these foils, finds nothing wanting in himself, so is solaced with a good comfortable opinion of his present estate, and a slothful negligence of improving it. And this, beloved, is the ordinary lenitive which the devil administers to the sharp unquiet diseases of the conscience, if at any time they begin to rage,—the only conserve that he folds his bitterest receipts in, that they may go down undiscerned,—that we are not worse than other men; that we shall be sure to have companions to hell; nay, that we need not neither at all fear that danger; for if heaven gates be so strait as not to receive such sinners as we, the rooms within are like to be but poorly furnished with guests; the marriage feast will never be eaten, unless the lame and cripples in the street or hospital be fetched in to fill the table. But, beloved, the comforts with which the devil furnisheth these men are,—if they were not merely feigned and fantastical,—yet very beggarly and lamentable, such as Achilles in Homer[8] would have scorned, only to be chief among the dead, or princes and eminent persons in hell. We must set our emulation higher than so, somewhat above the ordinary pitch or mark. Let our designs fly at the same white that the skilfullest marksmen in the army of saints and martyrs have aimed at before us; that the ἀσκηταὶ, and ἀθληταὶ, and τροπαιοφόροι of the Church, the religious exercisers and champions and trophy-bearers of this holy martial field have dealt in. It is a poor boast to have outgone heathens and Turks in virtue and good works; to be taller than the dwarfs, as it were, and pigmies of the world; we must not be thus content, but outvie even the sons of Anak, those tall, giantly, supererogatory under-

[8] [Cf. Hom. Odyssey, xi. 491.]

takings of the proudest, nay, humblest Romanists. O what a disgrace will it be for us Protestants at the dreadful day of doom! O what an accession not only to our torments, but our shame, and indignation at ourselves, to see the expectation of meriting in a papist, nay, the desire of being counted virtuous in a heathen, attended with a more pompous train of charitable magnificent deeds, of constant magnanimous sayings, than all our faith can shew, or vouch for us! Shall not the Romanist triumph and upbraid us in St. James's language, "Thou hast faith and I have works," and all that Jam. ii. 18.
we can fetch out of St. Paul not able to stop his mouth from going on, "shew me thy faith without thy works," as our English reads it out of the Syriac and vulgar Latin, "and I will shew thee my faith by my works?" It will be but a nice distinction for thee then to say, that works are to be separated from the act of justification, when they are found separated *a supposito*, from the person also. But not to digress; the Pharisee seems here pretty well provided,—no extortioner, no adulterer, guilty of no injustice. And how many be there among you that cannot go thus far with the Pharisee! Some vice or other perhaps there is, that agrees not with your constitution or education; drunkenness is not for one man's turn, prodigality for another's, and I doubt not but that many of you are as forward as the Pharisee to thank God, or rather require God to thank them, that they are not given to such or such a vice. But if you were to be required here to what the Pharisee undertakes, if you were to be arraigned at that severe tribunal, I say not concerning your thoughts and evil communications, but even the gross actual, nay, habitual sins; if a jury or a rack were set to enquire into you throughly, how many of you durst pretend to the Pharisee's innocence and confidence, that you are not extortioners, unjust, adulterers! Nay, how many be there that have all the Pharisee's pride and censoriousness, and all these other sins too into the vantage! Certainly there is not one place in the Christian world that hath more reason to humble itself for two or all three of these vices, than this city wherein you live. I am sorry I have said this, and I wish it were uncharitably spoken of me; but though it will not become me to have thought it of you, yet it will

concern you to suspect it of yourselves, that by acknowledging your guilts you may have them cancelled, and by judging yourselves, prevent being judged of the Lord. And here St. Chrysostom's[t] caution will come in very seasonably toward a conclusion of all, that the publican's sins be not preferred before the Pharisee's works, but only before his pride. It is not his store of moral virtues that was like to prove the Pharisee's undoing, but his overvaluing them; *ταράττει οὐ τὰ πράγματα, ἀλλὰ δόγματα,* saith the Stoic[u], appliable to this also. It is not his innocence that hath so encumbered him all this while, but his opinion of it. The fasting and the tithing must not be cast away, because the Pharisee was proud of them; this were a furious discipline which would down with all violently, that had ever been abused to idolatry or sin; or with him in Plutarch[x], that because poetry had some ill consequences sometimes, would have the muses and their favourites dispatched into Epicurus's boat. His counsel was more seasonable, that, to prevent drunkenness, appointed them to mix water with their wine, that the mad god might be allayed with a tame sober one; and that is the caution that I told you of, that you abstract the Pharisee's works from his pride, and then borrow the publican's humility from his works; that you come to the temple of God with all the provision a Pharisee can boast of, and then lay it down all at the publican's feet, and take up his *miserere*, his sighs, his dejection, his indignation at himself instead of it, then shall you be fit to approach to that *templum misericordiæ* which Gerson speaks of, *sine simulachro, &c.*, that had not a picture or image of a saint in it, no manner of ostentation or show of works, *non sacrificiis sed gemitibus, &c.*, not to be visited with sacrifices but sighs, not to be filled with triumphant *ἐπινίκια*, songs of rejoicing and victories, but with the calm and yet ravishing rhetoric of the publican, *θεὸς ἱλάσθητί μοι* [*τῷ*] *ἁμαρτωλῷ*, "Lord be merciful to me a sinner." Even so, O Lord, deal Thou with us, according to Thy mercies; visit us with Thy salvation, draw us with Thy mercies, and enlighten us with Thy Spirit, Thy humbling Spirit to season us with a sense of our sins and un-

[1 Cor. xi. 31.]

[t] [De Incomprehens. Dei Naturâ, Hom. v. Op., tom. i. p. 490, C.]

[u] Arrian Epict. Dissert. [i. 19. 7.]

[x] [Quom. Adolesc. Poet. aud. debeat., § 1. tom. vi. p. 53. ed. Reisk.]

worthiness; Thy sanctifying Spirit to fill us here with all holy sincere requisite graces; and in the Spirit of Thy power to accomplish us hereafter with that immarcessible crown of glory.

Now to Him, &c.

SERMON XXI.

MATT. iii. 3.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord.

THAT our preface may afford some light to our proceeding, that it may prepare the way and stand us in stead hereafter in our discourse of preparation, we will employ it to observe that natural progress and method of all things, which consists in steps and degrees: travelling on by those gists which nature hath set them from one stage to another, from a lower degree of perfection to an higher, built upon this ground of nature, that the first things are always least perfect, yet absolutely necessary to the perfection of the last: and in sum, so much the more necessary, by how much less perfect. Thus is the foundation more necessary to an house than the walls, and the first stone than the whole foundation, because the walls are necessary only to the setting on of the roof, not to the laying of the foundation; the foundation necessary both to the walls and roof, but not to the first stone; because that may be laid without the whole foundation: but the first stone necessary to all the rest, and therefore of greatest and most absolute necessity. The course of nature is delineated and expressed to us by the like proceedings and method of arts and sciences. So those general principles that are most familiar to us, are the poorest and yet most necessary rudiments required to any deeper speculation: the first stage of the understanding in its peregrination or travel into those foreign parts of more hidden knowledge is usually very short; and it is most requisite it should be so; for beginning at home with some *κοιναὶ ἔννοιαι*, and taking its rise at its own threshold, thereby it advances the length, and secures the success of the future voyage. Thus in politics hath the

body of laws from some thin beginnings under Lycurgus, Solon, Phaleas, and the like, by daily accessions and further growth at last increased into a fair bulk; every age perfecting somewhat, and by that degree of perfection making the matter capable of a further; so that the very politics themselves, as well as each commonwealth, have been observed to have their infancy, youth, and manhood, the last of which is the only perfect state; which yet this body had never attained to, had it not been content to submit itself to the imperfection of the former. Thus also in practical philosophy there be some *præambula operationis*, some common precepts which must be instilled into us, to work a consistency in our tempers firm enough for the undertaking and performing all moral tasks. One excellent one Aristotle[a] learnt from Plato, in the second of the Ethics, χαίρειν τε καὶ λυπεῖσθαι οἷς δεῖ, a skill of ordering those two passions aright, joy and sorrow, an habit never to rejoice or grieve but on just occasion: which lesson we must con perfectly when we are young, and then with years an easy discipline will bring on virtue of its own accord. Lastly, in the transcendent knowledge of metaphysics, which Aristotle would fain call wisdom, it is the philosophers' labour, which they were very sedulous in, to invent and set down rules to prepare us for that study: the best that Aristotle hath is in the third of Metaph.[b], to examine and inform ourselves, περὶ ὧν ἀπορῆσαι δεῖ πρῶτον, "which things are chiefly worth doubting of," and searching after: in which one thing if we would observe his counsel, if we would learn to doubt only of those things which are worth our knowledge, we should soon prove better scholars than we are. Jamblichus[c], beyond all the rest, most to the purpose prescribes retiredness and contempt of the world, that so we might ταῖς διεξόδοις τοῦ νοῦ ζῆν, ever "live and be nourished by the excursions of the mind towards God;" where indeed he speaks more like a Christian than a Pythagorean, as if he had learnt Christ, to deny himself and the world, and follow Him, and intended to come to that pitch and ἀκμὴ which St. Paul speaks of, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith," &c. But to conclude this *præcognoscendum*,

Gal. ii. 20

[a] [Cf. Arist. Nic. Eth., lib. ii. c. 2.]
[b] [Arist. Metaph. B. c. 1.]
[c] Jambl. Protrept., pp. 36, 37.

there be throughout all works of nature and imitations of art some imperfect grounds on which all perfection is built; some common expressions with which the understanding is first signed; some ground-colours without the laying on of which no perfect effigies or portraiture can be drawn. Nay thus it is in some measure in spiritual matters also; we are men before we are Christians: there is a natural life and there is a spiritual life. And as in the resurrection, so also in the spiritual παλιγγενεσία of the soul, "first that which is natural, and after that which is spiritual:" and in the spiritual life there be also its periods, the infancy, the youth and virility of the spirit; the first being most imperfect yet most necessary, and preparing the way to the last perfection. To bring all home to the business in hand; thus did it not befit the Saviour of the world to come abruptly into it; to put on flesh as soon as flesh had put on sin; the business was to be done by degrees, and after it had been a long time in working, for the final production of it, the fulness of time was to be expected. The law had its time of pædagogy to declare itself, and to be obeyed as His usher for many years; and after all this, He appears not in the world till His Baptist hath proclaimed Him; He makes not toward His court till His harbinger hath taken up the rooms. He comes not to inhabit either in the greater or lesser Jewry, the world or man's heart, till the precursor hath warned all to make ready for Him; and this is the voice of the precursor's sermon and the words of my text, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

[1 Cor. xv. 46.]

Instead of dividing the words I shall unite them, and after I have construed them to you, contrive that into one body which would not conveniently be dismembered. Ἑτοιμάζειν signifies to fit, to prepare, to make ready. "Ye" are all those to whom Christ should ever come. "The ways of the Lord" are whatsoever is capable of receiving of Christ or His gospel, peculiarly the hearts of the elect. The form of speech, imperative, notes the whole *complexum* to be one single duty required of all the Baptist's and my auditors, *sub hac forma*, that every man's heart must be prepared for the receiving of Christ, or, punctually to imitate the order of the words in my text, the preparation of the soul is required for Christ's

birth in us. For there is in every elect vessel a spiritual ἐνσάρκωσις, or "mystical incarnation" of Christ, where the soul, like Mary, is first overshadowed by the Holy Ghost, then conceives, then carries in the womb, grows big, and at last falls into travail and brings forth Christ. My text goes not thus far to bring to the birth, neither will I. My discourse shall be happy if it may be His Baptist, His πρόδρομος in your hearts, to prepare them for His birth, which I shall endeavour to do, first, by handling preparation in general; 2. the preparation here specified, of the soul; 3. in order to Christ's birth in us.

And first of preparation in general; ἑτοιμάζετε, "prepare ye," or make ready. The necessity of this performance to any undertaking may appear by those several precedaneous methods in common life, which have nothing in themselves to ingratiate them unto us, but cost much toil and trouble, yet notwithstanding are submitted to. If the earth would answer the farmer's expectation without any culture or husbandry, he would never be so prodigal towards it. But seeing it hath proposed its fruitfulness under condition of our drudgery, we plough, and harrow, and manure, and drain, and weed it, or else we are sure to fare the worse at harvest. The variety of preparations in these low affairs was by Cato and Varro and Columella accounted a pretty piece of polite necessary learning. And a Christian, if he will apply their rules to his spiritual Georgics, the culture of his soul, shall be able to husband it the better; and by their directions have a further insight into those fallow grounds of his own heart, which the prophet speaks of. It were a great, and perhaps unnecessary journey, to trace over the whole world of creatures to perfect this observation: almost every passage of nature will furnish you with an example. Hence is it that they that had nothing but natural reason to instruct them, were assiduous in this practice, and never ventured on any solemn business without as solemn endeavours to fit themselves for the work they took in hand; those series of preparations before the ancient *athletica*, as anointing, and bathing, and rubbing, and dust, it were fit enough for a sermon to insist on the exercise which they prepared, for being reputed sacred and parts of their solemnest worship; and the moral of them would prove of

[Hos. x. 12.]

good use to discipline, and to bring us up to those spiritual *agones* mentioned in Scripture, as *πάλη*, Eph. vi. 12, *πυγμὴ*, 1 Cor. ix. 26, and in the same place *δρόμος ἐν σταδίῳ*, and its preparative *ὑπωπιασμὸς*, wrestling, cuffing, and running, three of the five Olympian games adopted as it were into the Church, and spiritualized by the Apostle for our imitation. But to pass by these and the like as less apposite for our discourse, what shall we think? Was it superstition, or rather mannerliness, that made the Grecian priests so rub and wash and scour themselves before they would meddle with a sacrifice? *δεισιδαιμονία* it was, and that we construe superstition; but indeed it signifies an awe and reverence to the deity they worship, and a fear and a care lest the unpreparedness of the priest should pollute their sacrifice; as it is much to be feared that our holiest duties, for want of this care, are turned into sin; the vanities and faults of our very prayers adding to the number of those guilts we pray against, and every sacrifice, even of atonement itself, needing some expiation. To look awhile on the highest part, and as it were the sacraments of their religion, their *Eleusinia sacra*, resembling in one respect Christian baptism, in another holy orders; what a multitude of rites and performances were required of every one before his admission to them! For their *μυστήρια* being divided into two classes, the lesser or lower sort were *præludia* to the greater, or as the scholiast on Aristophanes[d] hath it more clearly to our purpose, *προκάθαρσις καὶ προάγνευσις τῶν μεγάλων*, "a premundation or presanctification" of them that sued to be admitted higher: as baptism, confirmation, and a Christian education in the Church, fits us for the participations of those mysteries which the other sacraments present to us, so that it punctually notes that preparation we here talk of: for before they were admitted to those grand *τελεταὶ* and *ἐποπτεία*, they were, saith Suidas, to spend a year or two in a lower form, undergo a shop of purgations, *λοῦτρα*, *καθάρσεις*, and many more; so that Tertullian[e] could not without wonder and praise of their solemnities observe *tot suspiria epoptarum, et multam in adytis divinitatem*. It was no mean toil nor ordinary merit that was required to

Eph. vi. 12; 1 Cor. ix. 26.

[Acts xvii. 22.]

[d] [Plutarch. De Auditione. Op., tom. vi. p. 170. Reiske. Schol. on Aristoph. Plut. v. 846.]

[e] Tertull., lib. i. in. Valent. ad init.

make them capable[f] of these *ἁγίαι τελεταὶ*, as Aristophanes[g] calls them. The ground of all the ceremony we may observe to be the natural impurity which the heathens themselves acknowledge to be in every man, as may appear most distinctly by Jamblichus[h], though they knew not clearly at what door it came in at; sure they were they found it there, and therefore their own reason suggested them that things of an excellent purity, of an inherent or at least an adherent sanctity, were not to be adventured on by an impure nature, *ἀλλὰ μετὰ τινῶν καθαρμῶν*, saith Clement[i], till it had by some laborious prescribed means somewhat rid itself of its pollutions; and this the barbarian did *μόνῳ λούτρῳ*, saith he, thinking the bare washing of the outward parts sufficient: but the Grecians, whom learning had made more substantial in their worship, required moreover an habituate temper of passions, *longam castimoniam et sedatam mentem*, that the inward calmness and serenity of the affections might perform the promises of the outward purity. In sum, when they were thus qualified and had fulfilled the period, or circle of their purgation required to their *μύησις*, they were at length admitted *intra adyta ad epoptica sacra*, where all the mysteries of their theology were revealed to them. All which seems to me—as much as can be expected from their dim imperfect knowledge—to express the state of grace and saving knowledge in the world; and also the office of ministering in sacred things, into which no man was thought fit to be received or initiated but he which had undergone a prenticeship of purgations: for although those Eleusinia of theirs, at a Christian's examination, would prove nothing but religious delusions, containing some prodigies of their mythical divinity; in sum, but grave specious puppets and solemn serious nothing; yet hence it may appear that the eye of nature, though cheated in the main, taking that for a sacred mystery which was but a prodigious vanity, yet kept itself constant in its ceremonies; would not dare or hope to approach abruptly to any thing which it could believe to be holy. Now shall we be more saucy in our devotions, and insolent in our approaches to

[f] [Plutarch. ibid.]
[g] [Aristoph. Nub. 304.]
[h] Protrept., [explanation of Symbol. iv.]
[i] [Clemens Alexandr. Strom., lib. v. cap. 11. § 71. p. 689.]

either the throne of majesty or grace of our true God, than they were to the unprofitable empty τελεταὶ of their false? Shall we call the mannerliness of the heathen up in judgment against the Christian rudeness? It will be an horrid exprobration at the day of doom, when a neat, washed, respectful Gentile shall put a swinish, miry, negligent Christian to shame; such a one who never took so much care to trim himself to entertain the Bridegroom, as the heathen did to adore an empty gaud, a vain ridiculous bauble. Yet is not their example prescribed you as an accomplished pattern, as the pitch to aim at and drive no higher: but rather as a στηλιτευτικὸν, a sarcasm or contumely engraved in marble to upbraid you mightily if you have not gone so far. All that they practised was but superficial and referring to the body, and therein the washing of the outsides; yours must be inward, and of the soul; which is the next word in the doctrine, the specification of it by the subject noted in the text by τὴν ὁδὸν, "the way," and expressed in the latter part of the subject of my proposition, the preparation of the soul.

This preparation consists in removing those burdens, and wiping off those blots of the soul, which any way deface or oppress it; in scouring off that rust and filth which it contracted in the womb, and driving it back again as near integrity as may be. And this was the aim and business of the wisest among the ancients, who conceived it possible fully to repair what was lost, because the privation was not total; and finding some sparks of the primitive flame still warm within them, endeavoured and hoped hard to enliven them. To this purpose a great company of them, saith St. Austin[j], puzzled themselves in a design of purging the soul *per θεουργίαν, et consecrationes theurgicas,* but all in vain, as Porphyry himself confesses; "No man," saith he, "by this theurgic magic could ever purge himself the nearer to God, or wipe his eyes clear enough for such a vision." They indeed went more probably to work, which used no other magic or exorcism to cast out these devils, to clear and purge the soul, but only their reason, which the moralist set up and maintained against θυμὸς and ἐπιθυμία, the two ringleaders of sensuality. To this purpose did Socrates, the first and wisest

[j] [Cf. S. August. De Civit. Dei, lib. x. c. 9. Op., tom. vii. p. 245.]

moralist, furnish and arm the reasonable faculty with all helps and defensations that philosophy could afford it, that it might be able to shake off and disburden itself of those encumbrances which naturally weighed and pressed it downward, *ut exoneratus animus naturali vigore in æterna se attolleret*[k]: where if that be true which some observe of Socrates, that his professing to know nothing was because all was taught him by his δαιμόνιον, I wonder not that by others his δαιμόνιον is called θεὸς, and consecrated into a deity: for certainly never devil bore so much charity to mankind, and treachery to his own kingdom, as to instruct him in the cleansing of his soul: whereby those strongholds of Satan are undermined, which cannot subsist but on a stiff and deep clay foundation. From these beginnings of Socrates, the moralists ever since have toiled hard at this task, to get the soul ἐκ γενέσεως, as Jamblichus[l] phrases it, out of that corruption of its birth, that impurity born with it, which the soul contracts by its conversation with the body, and from which, they say, only philosophy can purge it. For it is Philoponus's[m] observation, that that canon of the physicians, "that the inclinations of the soul necessarily follow the temper of the body," is by all men set down with that exception implied, "unless the man have studied philosophy," for that study can reform the other, καὶ μὴ ἕπεσθαι ποιεῖν, "make the soul contemn the commands," and arm it against the influences and poisons and infections of the body. In sum, the main of philosophy was to this purpose, to take off the soul from those corporeal dependencies, and so in a manner restore it to its primitive self; that is, to some of that divine perfection with which it was infused, for then is the soul to be beheld in its native shape, when it is stripped of all its passions. At other times you do not see the soul, but some froth and weeds of it; as the gray part of the sea is not to be called sea, ἀλλὰ τὰ φυκία ἃ περιβέβληται, "some scurf and foam and weeds that lie on the top of it." So then to this spiritualizing of the soul, and recovering it to the simplicity of its essence, their main precepts were to quell and suppress τὸν ἐν ψυχῇ

[k] [S. Augustin., De Civit. Dei, lib. viii. c. 3.]

[l] [Jambl. Protrept., c. iii.]

[m] [Philoponus, Comment. in Aristot. De Anima, on the words, ἔοικε δὲ τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς πάθη.—De A., lib. i. c. 1.]

δῆμον, as Maximus Tyrius[n] speaks, that turbulent, prachant, "common people of the soul," all the irrational affections, and reduce it εἰς πολιτείαν, "into a monarchy or regal government," where reason might rule lord and king. For whensoever any lower affection is suffered to do any thing there, saith Philoponus[o], "we do not work like men but some other creatures." Whosoever suffers their lower nutritive faculties to act freely, οὗτοι κινδυνεύουσιν ἀποδενδρωθῆναι, "these men are in danger to become trees:" that is, by these operations they differ nothing from mere plants. So those that suffer their sensitive appetites, lust and rage, to exercise at freedom, are not to be reckoned men, but beasts; τότε μόνον ὡς ἄνθρωποι, κ.τ.λ., "then only will our actions argue us men, when our reason is at the forge." This was the aim and business of philosophy, to keep us from unmanning ourselves, to restore reason to its sceptre, to rescue it from the tyranny of that most atheistical usurper, as Jamblichus calls the affections; and from hence he which lived according to those precepts of philosophy was said both by them and Clement, and the fathers, κατὰ νοῦν ζῆν, and in Austin, *secundum intellectum vivere*, to live according to the guidance of the reasonable soul. Which whosoever did, saith Plotinus, though by it in respect of divinity he was not perfect, yet at last should be sure to find a gracious providence, first to perfect, then to crown his natural moderate well-tempered endeavour, as Austin cites it out of him[p]. This whole course and proceedings and assent of the soul, through these philosophical preparations to spiritual perfection, is summarily and clearly set down for us in Photius out of Isidorus[q], philosophically observed to consist in three steps, τὰ μὲν πρῶτα, κ.τ.λ. The first business of the soul is to call in those parts of it which were engaged in any foreign fleshly employ-

[n] Maximus Tyr. supr. p. 278.

[o] [Plotinus, quoted by Philoponus, Comment. in Aristot. de Anima, f. 4. ed. Aldus.]

[p] [S. August. De Civit. Dei, lib. x. c. 29, addressing Porphyry: Uteris etiam hoc verbo apertius, ubi Platonis sententiam sequens, nec ipse dubitas, in hac vita hominem nullo modo ad perfectionem sapientiæ pervenire, secundum intellectum tamen viventibus omne quod deest, providentiâ Dei et gratiâ, post hanc vitam posse compleri.]

[q] [αὐτὴν δὲ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐν ταῖς ἱεραῖς εὐχαῖς πρὸς ὅλον τὸ θεῖον πέλαγος εἶναι, τὰ μὲν πρῶτα συναγειρομένην ἀπὸ τοῦ σώματος εἰς ἑαυτὴν, αὖθις δὲ ἐξισταμένην τῶν ἰδίων ἠθῶν, καὶ ἀναχωροῦσαν ἀπὸ τῶν λογικῶν ἐννοιῶν ἐπὶ τὰς τῷ νῷ συγγενεῖς, ἐκ δ' αὖ τρίτων ἐνθουσιῶσαν καὶ παραλλάττουσαν εἰς ἀήθη τινὰ γαλήνην θεοπρεπῆ καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρωπίνην.—S. Isidorus Pel. ap. Phot. Biblioth., p. 350. Bekker.]

ment, and retire and collect itself unto itself: and then secondly, it learns to quit itself, to put off the whole natural man, ἴδια ἤθη, "its own fashions" and conceits: all the notions, all the pride of human reason, and set itself on those things which are nearest kin to the soul, that is, spiritual affairs; and then thirdly, ἐνθουσιᾷ καὶ παραλλάττει, it falls "into holy enthusiasms and spiritual elevations," which it continues, till it be changed and led into the calm and serenity above the state of man, agreeable to the tranquillity and peace which the gods enjoy. And could the philosophers be their own scholars, could they exhibit that felicity which they describe and fancy, they might glory in their morality, and indeed be said to have prepared and purged the soul for the receipt of the most pure and spiritual guest. But certainly their speculation outran their practice; and their very morality was but theorical, to be read in their books and wishes far more legible than in their lives and their enjoyments. Yet some degrees also of purity, or at least a less measure of impurity they attained to, only upon the expectation and desire of happiness proposed to them upon condition of performance of moral precepts; for all things being indifferently moved to the obtaining of their *summum bonum;* all, I say, not only rational agents, ἀλλὰ καὶ φύσει κινούμενα ἀλόγως, as Andronicus saith on the Ethics[r], "which have nothing but nature to incite them to it;" the natural man may, upon a sight and liking of an happiness proposed on severe conditions, call himself into some degrees of moral temper, as best suiting to the performance of the means and obtaining of the end he looks for; and by this temper be said to be morally better than another, who hath not taken this course to subdue his passions. And this was evident enough among the philosophers, who were as far beyond the ordinary sort in severity of conversation, as depth of learning: and read them as profitable precepts in the example of their lives, as ever the schools breathed forth in their lectures. Their profession was incompatible with many vices, and would not suffer them to be so rich in variety of sins as the vulgar; and then whatsoever they thus did, an unregenerate Christian may surely perform in a far higher

[r] [Andronicus in his Paraphrase of the Nic. Ethics ad init.]

measure, as having more choice of ordinary restrainment from sin than ever had any heathen: for it will be much to our purpose to take notice of those ordinary restraints by which unregenerate men may be, and are curbed, and kept back from sinning; and these, saith Austin, God affords to the very reprobates, *non continens in ira suas misericordias.* Much to this same purpose hath holy Maximus[s] in those admirable sections, *περὶ ἀγάπης*, where most of the restraints he speaks of are competible to the unregenerate, *φόβος ἀνθρώπων, κ.τ.λ.* 1. Fear of men. 2. Denunciation of judgments from heaven. 3. Temperance and moral virtues: nay, sometimes other moral vices, as *κενοδοξία*, "vain-glory" or ostentation of integrity. 4. Natural impressions to do to others as we would be done to. 5. Clearness of judgment in discerning good from evil. 6. An expectation of a reward for any thing well done; lastly, some gripes and twinges of the conscience: to all add a tender disposition; a good Christian education; common custom of the country where one lives, where some vices are out of fashion; nay at last the word of God daily preached; not a love, but servile fear of it. These, I say, and the like may outwardly restrain unregenerate men from riots; may curb and keep them in, and consequently preserve the soul from that weight of the multitude of sins which press down other men to a desperation of mercy. Thus is one unregenerate man less engaged in sin than another, and consequently his soul less polluted; and so in all likelihood more capable of the ordinary means of salvation, than the more stubborn habituate sinner; when every aversion, every commission of every sin doth more harden against grace, more alien and set at a greater distance from heaven: and this briefly we call a moral preparation of the soul; and a purging of it, though not absolutely from sin, yet from some measure of reigning sin, and disposing of it to a spiritual estate: and this is no more than I learn from Bradwardine in his lib. i. *de causa Dei,* ch. 37[t]. A servile fear, a sight of some inconvenience, and moral habit of virtue, and the like, *multum retrahunt a peccato, inclinant ad opera bona, et sic ad charitatem, et gratiam, et opera vere grata præparant*

[s] [S. Maximus, Centena Capita de Caritate, ii §§ 23, 32.]

[t] [Bradwardine, De Causa Dei, lib. i. c. 37. ad fin.]

et disponunt. And so I come to my last part, to shew of what use this preparation of the soul is, in order to Christ's birth in us, "The ways of the Lord."

I take no great joy in presenting controversies to your ears out of this place; yet seeing I am already fallen upon a piece of one, I must now go through it; and to quit it as soon as I can, present the whole business unto you in some few propositions, of which some I shall only recite as conceiving them evident enough by their own light: the rest I shall a little insist on, and then apply and drive home the profit of all to your affections. And in this pardon me, for certainly I should never have meddled with it, had not I resolved it a theory that most nearly concerned your practice, and a speculation that would instruct your wills as well as your understandings. The propositions which contain the sum of the business are these.

1. No preparation in the world can deserve or challenge God's sanctifying grace: "the Spirit bloweth where it listeth," and cannot by any thing in us be predetermined to its object or its work.

2. The Spirit is of power to work the conversion of any, the greatest, sinner; at one minute to strike the most obdurate heart and soften it, and out of the unnatural womb of stones, infinitely more unfruitful than barrenness and age had made the womb of Sarah, "to raise up children unto Abraham." According to the *ὑπόθεσις* of Aristotle, *νόσους ὑγιάζουσι πολλάκις ὅταν πολὺ ἐκστῇ τις*[u], "diseases are sometimes cured when the patient is at the extremity or height of danger," in an ecstasy and almost quite gone.

3. It is an ill consequence, that because God can and sometimes doth call unprepared sinners, therefore it is probable He will deal so with thee in particular, or with unprepared men in general. God doth not work in conversion as a physical agent, to the extent of His power, but according to the sweet disposition and counsel of His will.

4. In unprepared hearts there be many professed enemies to grace, ill dispositions, ambition, atheism, pride of spirit, and, in chief, an habit in a voluptuous settled course of sinning, an indefatigable resolute walking after their own lusts. And

[u] Problem. 1. § 2.

therefore there is very little hope that Christ will ever vouchsafe to be born in such polluted hardened souls. For it is Basil's[v] observation that that speech of the fool's heart, "There is no God," was the cause that the Gentiles were given over to a reprobate sense, and fell headlong *εἰς πάντα βδελύγματα*, "into all manner of abominations." Hence it is that Jobius in Photius[x] observes that in Scripture some are called "dogs," some "unworthy to receive the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," that some "hated the light" and came not to it, as if all those had taken a course to make themselves uncapable of mercy, and by a perfect hostility frighted Christ out of their coasts. In the liberal dispensation of miracles in the Gospel you would wonder to see Christ a niggard in His own country, yet so, in respect of other places, He was, and "did not many miracles there, because of their unbelief," not that their incredulity had manacled Him, had shortened His hand, or straitened His power, but that miracles, which when they met with a passive willingness, a contentedness in the patient to receive and believe them, were then the ordinary instruments of faith and conversion, would have been but cast away upon obdurate hearts; so that for Christ to have numbered miracles among His unbelieving countrymen no way prepared to receive them, had been an injurious liberality, and added only to their unexcusableness; which contradicts not the axiom of St. Paul, "that some signs are only for unbelievers:" for even those unbelievers must have within them *τὸ ἐπιτήδειον τῆς ὑπακοῆς*, "a proneness or readiness to receive them with belief," *καὶ εἰσοικίζεσθαι, κ.τ.λ.* in Jobius[y], to "open to the spirit knocking" by those miracles, and improve them to their best profit.

Mat. xv. 26.
Mat. xiii. 11.
John iii. 20.
Mat. xiii. 58.
1 Cor. xiv. 22.

5. Though God needs not, yet He requires moral preparation of us, as an ordinary means to make us more capable of grace: for although according to St. Austin, *Ne ipsa quidem justitia nostra indiget Deus:* yet according to Salvian's[z] limi-

[v] [S. Basil. Procem. de Judicio Dei. Op., tom. ii. p. 215, A, B.]

[x] [Jobius ap. Photium in Biblioth., p. 627. ed. Hoeschel.]

[y] [*ἐκείνοις μέντοι ταῦτα προβάλλεσθαι, οἵ τὸ ἐπιτήδειον τῆς ὑπακοῆς ἀντιπαρέχονται καὶ τὴν ἀπ' αὐτῶν ὠφέλειαν εἰσοικίζονται· ὅσους δὲ τῶν ἀπίστων ἑκουσίως πρὸς τὰ τῶν ἔργων ὑπερφυῆ τυφλώττοντας ἐπιστάμεθα, τούτοις ἡ τῶν σημείων προβολὴ ἀπρονόητόν τε καὶ μάταιον.* —Jobius ap. Phot. Biblioth., p. 202. Bekker.]

[z] [Sed Deus, inquis, non eget retributione? Nihil minus quam ut non egeat. Non eget enim juxta potentiam suam,

tation, *Eget juxta præceptionem suam, licet non juxta potentiam: eget secundum legem suam, non eget secundum majestatem.* We are to think that God hath use of any thing which He commands, and therefore must perform whatever He requires, and not dare to be confident of the end, without the observation of the means prescribed. It is too much boldness, if not presumption, to leave all to His omnipotent working, when He hath prescribed us means to do somewhat ourselves.

6. Integrity and honesty of heart, a sober moral life, and chiefly humility and tenderness of spirit; in sum, whatever degree of innocence, either study, or fear, or love, or natural disposition can work in us, some or all of which may in some measure be found in some men not yet regenerate, are good preparations for Christ's birth in us; so saith Clement[a] of philosophy, that it doth προπαρασκευάζειν, κ.τ.λ., "make ready and prepare the way against Christ's coming," συνεργεῖν, "cooperate" with other helps that God hath given us; all with this caution, that it doth only prepare, not perfect; facilitate the pursuit of wisdom to us, οὐ μέντοι ἀθηράτου οὔσης δίχα αὐτῆς, "which God may bestow on us without this means." To this purpose hath Basil[b] a notable homily to exhort scholars to the study of foreign, human, especially Grecian learning, and to this end saith he, "that we prepare ourselves, εἰς τὰ ἄνω, to the heavenly spiritual philosophy." In the like kind the fathers prescribe good works of charity, observing out of the nineteenth of St. Matthew, that the distribution of all their substance to the poor was a *præludium* in the primitive believers to the following of Christ, *Prius vendant omnia quam sequantur:* from whence he calls alms-deeds, *exordia quasi et incunabula conversionis nostræ.* The like may be said, though not in the same degree, of all other courses, *quibus carnalium sarcinarum impedimenta projicimus:* for if these forementioned preparations be mere works of nature in us, as some

Vid. Wisd. iii. 14.

[Mat. xix. 21.]

sed eget juxta præceptionem suam, non eget secundum majestatem suam, sed eget secundum legem suam; et in se ipso quidem non eget, sed in multis eget: non quærit in se munificentiam, sed in suis quærit; et ideo non eget quidem juxta omnipotentiam, sed eget juxta misericordiam; non eget Deitate pro semetipso, sed eget pietate pro nobis.—Salvian. adv. Avaritiam, lib. iv. § 140.]

[a] Clement. Alex. Strom., lib. i. c. 5; and c. vi. § 35. pp. 331. ad fin.—337.

[b] [S. Basil. Serm. de legend. libris Gentilium. Op, tom. ii. p. 173.]

would have them, then do they naturally incline the subject for the receiving of grace when it comes, and by fitting, as it were, and organizing the subject, facilitate its entrance; or if they be works of God's restraining preventing grace, as it is most orthodoxly agreed on, then are they good harbingers for the sanctifying Spirit; good comfortable symptoms that God will perfect and crown the work which He hath begun in us.

7. God's ordinary course, as far as by events we can judge of it, is to call and save such as are thus prepared. Thus to instance in a few of the first and chiefest. It was appointed by God that she only should be vouchsafed the blessed office of dignity of being the *θεοτόκος*, "Christ's Mother," who was *πασῶν πάσαις ἀρεταῖς ὑπερανελθοῦσα*, saith he in Photius[c], "fuller of virtues than any else of her sex could brag of." In like manner, that the rest of the family, Christ's father and brethren, in account, on earth, should be such whose virtues had bestowed a more eminent opinion, though not place upon them amongst men; so was Joseph and his sons *δικαιοσύνῃ διαλάμποντες*, "famous for very just men," James the brother of the Lord *ἐκ κοιλίας ἅγιος*, "holy from the womb," (as Eusebius cites it[d],) called by the Jews *ὀβλίας*, saith he out of Hegesippus, which he interprets *περιοχὴ τοῦ λαοῦ, καὶ δικαιοσύνη*[e], "the stay of the people and justice itself." In brief; if a Cornelius be to be called from Gentilism to Christianity, ye shall find him in the beginning of his character, "to be a devout man and one that feared God with all his house, gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway:" one cut out as it were *εἰς ἀπαρχὴν ἔθνων*, "to be the first-fruit of the Gentiles." Now though none of these virtues can be imputed to nature in the substance of them, but acknowledge a more supernatural spiritual agent in them, yet are they to be reckoned as preparations to Christ's birth in them, because they did precede it: for so in respect of His real incarnation in the world, the type of His spiritual in the soul, Mary was a virtuous pure virgin before the Holy Ghost overshadowed her, Joseph a just man before the Holy Ghost appeared to him, James holy from the womb, and Cornelius capable of all

Acts x. 2.

Mat. i. 19.

[c] [*ἔδει μητέρα Θεοῦ ἐπὶ γῆς γένεσθαι· τὴν πασῶν πάσαις ἀρεταῖς ὑπερανελθοῦσαν ἐκάλεσεν.*—Jobius ap. Photium Biblioth., p. 641. (ed. Hoeschel.)]

[d] [Euseb. Eccles. Hist. ii. 23.]

[e] Photius, ibid.

that commendation for devotion and alms-deeds, Acts x. 2, before either Christ was preached to him in the thirty-seventh or the Holy Ghost fell on him in the forty-fourth verse. Acts x. 2. ver. 37. ver. 44.

8. The conversion of unprepared, hardened, blasphemous sinners, is to be accounted as a most rare and extraordinary work of God's power and mercy, not an every day's work, like to be bestowed on every habituate sinner; and therefore it is commonly accompanied with some evident note of difference to point it out for a miracle. Thus was Paul called from "the chief of sinners" to the chief of saints, but with this mark, that "Christ Jesus might shew forth all long-suffering," &c., which was "in him first," and perhaps last, in that degree; that others in his pitch of blasphemies might not presume of the like miracle of mercy. And, indeed, he that is thus called must expect what Paul found, a mighty tempest throughout him, three days at least without sight or nourishment, if not a *παράλυσις* or *λιποψυχία*, "a swoon, a kind of ecstasy" of the whole man, at this tumultuary driving out of this high, rank, insolent, habituate body of sin. It is observed, that when the news of Christ's birth was brought by the "wise men," the city was straight in an uproar; "Herod was much troubled, and all Jerusalem with him," for it seems they expected no such matter, and therefore so strange and sudden news produced nothing but astonishment and tumult; whilst Simeon, "who waited for the consolation of Israel," makes no such strange business of it; takes Him presently into his embraces, and familiarly hugs Him in his arms, having been before acquainted with Him by his faith. Thus will it, at Christ's spiritual *ἐνσάρκωσις*, be in an unprepared heart, His reigning Herod sins, and all the Jerusalem and democracy of affections, a strange tumult of repining, old habituate passions will struggle fiercely, and shake the whole house before they leave it. If a strong man be to be dispossessed of house or abode, without warning, a hundred to one he will do some mischief at his departure, and draw at least some pillar after him: when as a prepared Simeon's soul lays hold as soon as he hears of Him, is already organized, as it were, for the purpose, holds out the arms and bosom of faith, and at the first minute of His appearance takes Him into his spiritual embraces. This very prepara-

1 Tim. i. 15, [16.]

Mat. ii. 3.

[Luke ii. 25.]

tion either had denied the strong man entrance, or else binds his hands, manacles that blind Samson, and turns him out in peace, and then the Spirit enters into that soul—which itself or its harbingers have prepared—in a soft still wind, in a still voice, and the soul shall feel its gale, shall hear its whispering, and shall scarce discern, perhaps not at all observe, the moment of its entrance.

Lastly, by way of corollary to all that hath been said, though God can, and sometimes doth, call blasphemous sinners; though nothing in us can facilitate God's action to Him; though none of our performances or His lower works in us, can merit or challenge His sanctifying grace; though, in brief, all that we can do is in some respect enmity to grace; yet certainly there is far more hope of the just, careful, moral man, which hath used all those restraints which are given him, that he shall be called and saved; of such a one we are to judge far more comfortably, and expect more confidently, than of another more habituate sinner, negligent of the commands of either God or nature. And this I conceive I have in some measure proved through each part of the former discourse, and so I should dismiss it and come to application, but that I am stayed and thwarted by a contrary proposition maintained by a sort of our popular preachers, with more violence than discretion, which I conceive to be of dangerous consequence, and therefore worth opening to you. In setting down the pitch that an unregenerate man may attain to, and yet be damned, some of our preaching writers are wont duly to conclude with this peremptory doctrine, that of a mere moral man, though never so severe a censor of his own ways, never so rigid an exactor of all the precepts of nature and morality in himself; yet of this man there is less hope, either that he shall be converted or saved, than the most debauched ruffian under heaven. The charity and purity of this doctrine you shall judge of, if you will accompany me awhile, and first observe that they go so far with the mere moral man, and drive him so high, that at his depression again, many a regenerate man falls with him under that title; and in issue, I fear, all will prove mere moralists in their doom, which do fall short of that degree of zeal, which their either faction or violent heats pre-

tend to; and so as Tertullian[f] objects to the heathen, expostulating with them why they did not deify Themistocles and Cato as well as Jove and Hercules, *Quot potiores viros apud inferos reliquistis?* They leave many an honester man in hell, than some of those whom their favour or faction hath besainted.

Secondly, observe to what end or use this doctrine may serve, but as an allay to civil honesty in a commonwealth, and fair, just dealing, which, forsooth, of late is grown so luxuriant, the world is like to languish and sink, it is so overburdened with it: and on the other side an encouragement to the sinner in his course, an engagement in the pursuit of vice to the height and *ἀκμὴ*, as the pitch and cue which God expects and waits for; as they conclude on these grounds, because He looked upon Peter not till the third denial, and then called Paul when he was most mad against the Christians: as if the nearest way to heaven were by hell-gates, and devils most likely to become saints; as if there were merit in abominations, and none in the right way to Christianity, but whom atheism would be ashamed of; as if, because "the natural man understands not," &c., all relics of natural purity were solemnly and *pro forma* to be abandoned to make us capable of spiritual. It is confessed that some have been and are thus converted, and by an ecstasy of the spirit snatched and caught like firebrands out of the fire; and though some must needs find their spiritual joys infinitely increased, *ἐκ παραλλήλου*, by that gall of bitterness, from which they were delivered, and are therefore more abundantly engaged to God, as being not the objects only, but the miracle of His mercy: but yet for all this shall one or two variations from the ordinary course, from the *ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ*, be turned into a ruled case? Shall the rarer examples of Mary Magdalen or a Saul prescribe and set up? Shall we sin to the purpose, as if we meant to threaten God that it were His best and safest course to call us? Shall we abound in rebellions, that grace may superabound? God pardon and forbid. [1 Cor. ii. 14.] [Rom. vi. 1.]

Thirdly, consider the reason of their proposition, and you shall judge of the truth of it, and besides their own fancies

[f] [Tertull. Apol. § 11.]

and resolution to maintain them, they have none but this, "the mere moral man trusts in his own righteousness, and this confidence in the arm of flesh is the greatest enemy to sanctifying grace, which works by spiritual humility." To which we answer distinctly, that the foresaid pride, trust or confidence, is neither effect nor necessary adjunct of morality, but an absolute defection from the rules thereof; and therefore whatsoever proceeds either as an effect, or consequent from pride or confidence, cannot yet be imputed to morality at all, or to the moral men *per se*, no more than the thundering or lightning is to be imputed to my walking, because it thunders whilst I walk; or preaching to my standing still, because whilst I stand still I preach; *οὐ γὰρ διὰ τὸ βαδίζειν ἤστραψεν, ἀλλὰ συνέβη τοῦτο*, saith Aristotle in the first Post. c. 4[g], "It doth not lighten because I walk, but that is an accident proceeding from some other cause." To strive against the motions of the Spirit, and so to render conversion more difficult, is an effect perhaps of pride or trust, but yet is not to be imputed to morality, though the moral man be proud or self-trusting, because this pride or self-trusting is not an effect, but an accident of morality; and therefore their judgment should be able to distinguish and direct their zeal against the accidental vice, not the essential innocent virtue, against pride, not morality. Besides, this pride is also as incident to him who is morally evil; nay, either supposes or makes its subject so, being formally a breach of morality. For that *σωφροσύνη* belonging to the understanding, which is, "not to think more highly" on one's own worth than he ought, *ἀλλὰ φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν*, do we not find it commended and dilated on by Aristotle[h], *μειζόνων ἢ ἄξιος, κ. τ. λ.*, "not to overprize his own worth," or to expect an higher reward than it in proportion deserves? So that he that trusts in his morality for heaven, doth *eo nomine* offend against morality, according to that of Salvian, *hoc ipsum genus maximæ injustitiæ est, si quis se justum præsumat;* and indeed Aristotle and Seneca could say as much: and so then the accusation is unjust and contumelious; for to a moral man if he be truly so, this pride or confidence is incompatible: for do we not find that

Rom. xii. 3.

[g] [Aristot. Post. Anal., lib. i. c. 4.]

[h] [Arist. Nic. Eth., lib. iv. c. 7.]

treble humility, ταπεινοφροσύνη, of the heart, πραότης, of the tongue, μακροθυμία, of the actions, handled also and prescribed by the philosophers? In sum, that which in all moral precepts comes nearest pride or highmindedness, is that μεγαλοψυχία, part of which is "setting value on one's-self." But if you observe, this goes no further than τὰ ἔξω ἀγαθὰ, "honour or worldly pomp:" as for the immortal blessedness of the soul, it was a thing infinitely above the pitch of their hope or confidence: the most perfect among them never pretended any *jus meriti* to it, and if they did, they had by so much the less hopes to attain to it. Now if it be supposed, as I fear is too true, that our moral men fall far short of the ancient philosophers, if they be now-a-days confident and trust in their works for salvation, then they do not make good their name; they are only so ὁμονύμως and καταχρηστικῶς, "abusively and notionally." And yet even these equivocal moral men seem to me in as good, if not better case, than the other term of comparison, the careless negligent debauched men. For upon their grounds is it not as easy for the converting spirit to enter and subdue one Lucifer, one proud devil in the heart, otherwise pretty well qualified, as to deal with a whole legion of blasphemous, violent, riotous, railing, ignorant devils? I have done all with the confutation of this loose groundless opinion, which if it were true, would yet prove of dangerous consequence to be preached, in abating and turning our edge, which is of itself blunt and dull enough toward goodness: nay, certainly it hath proved scandalous to those without; as may appear by that boast and exultancy of Campian[1] in his eighth reason, where he upbraids us Englishmen of our abominable Lutheran, licentious doctrine,—as he calls it,—*quanto sceleratior es, tanto vicinior gratiæ:* and therefore I do not repent that I have been somewhat large in the refuting of it; as also because it doth much import to the clearing of my discourse; for if the mere moral men be furthest from heaven, then have I all this while busied myself, and tormented you with an unprofitable, nay, injurious preparation, whereas I should have prescribed you a shorter easier call, by being ex-

Eph. iv. 2.

[1] Campian. [Rationes decem oblati certaminis in causa fidei redditæ Academicis Anglis.—Rat. viii. ad fin. apud Whitakeri Responsionem.]

tremely sinful, according to these two aphorisms of Hippocrates[k], *αἱ ἐπ' ἄκρον, κ.τ.λ.*, "The strongest bodies are in greatest danger," and *εἰς τὰ ἔσχατα*, the *ἀκμὴ* and "height of a disease is the fittest opportunity for a miraculous cure."

But beloved, let us more considerately bethink ourselves, let us study and learn and walk a more secure probable way to heaven; and for those of us which are yet unregenerate, though we obtained no grace of God but that of nature and reason, and our Christianity to govern us, yet let us not contemn those ordinary restraints which these will afford us: let us attend in patience, sobriety, and humility and prayers, the good time and leisures of the spirit; let us not make our reasonable soul, our profession of men, of Christians, ashamed of us; let not the heathen and beasts have cause to blush at us; let us remain men till it may please Him to call us into saints, lest being plunged in habitual confident sinning, that hell and Tophet on earth, the very omnipotent mercy of God be in a manner foiled to hale us out again; let us improve, rack, and stretch our natural abilities to the highest; that although, according to our thirteenth article, "we cannot please God," yet we may not mightily provoke Him. Let every man be in some proportion to his gifts, Christ's Baptist and forerunner and harbinger in himself, that whensoever He shall appear or knock, He may enter, lodge, and dwell without resistance. Lastly, after all thy preparations, be not secure; if the Bridegroom will not vouchsafe to rest with you, all your provision is in vain; all the morality, and learning, and gifts, and common graces, unless Christ at last be born in us, are but embryos, nay abortives, rude, imperfect, horrid, *νήπιοι καί εἰσιν οἱ φιλόσοφοι*, "that philosopher dies in his nonage in whom Christ was never born." The highest reach of years and learning is but infancy without the virility and manhood of the spirit, by which we are made perfect men in Christ Jesus. Wherefore above all things in the world let us labour for this perfection; let us melt and dissolve every faculty and spirit about us in pursuit of it, and at last seal, and bless, and crown our endeavours with our prayers; and with all the rhetoric, and means,

[k] [Aphorismi, tom. iii. pp. 706, 708. Medici Græci, tom. xxiii. ed. Kühn.]

and humility, and violence of our souls, importune and lay hold on the sanctifying Spirit, and never leave till He hath blessed and breathed on us. O Thou mighty, controlling, holy, hallowing Ghost, be pleased with Thine effectual working to suppress in us all resistance of the pride of nature, and prepare us for Thy kingdom of grace here, and glory hereafter.

Now to Him which hath elected us, hath created and redeemed us, &c.

SERMON XXII.

John vii. 48.

Have any of the Pharisees believed on Him?

It is observable from history with what difficulty religion attempts to propagate and establish itself with the many; what countenance and encouragement it hath required from those things which are most specious and pompous in the world; how it hath been fain to keep its dependencies and correspondencies, and submit to the poor condition of sustaining itself by those beggarly helps which the world and the flesh will afford it. Two main pillars which it relies on are power and learning, the camp and the schools, or in a word, authority of great ones and countenance of scholars; the one to force and extort obedience, the other to insinuate belief and assent; the first to ravish, the second to persuade. One instance for all: if we would plant Christianity in Turkey, we must first invade and conquer them, and then convince them of their follies; which about an hundred years ago Cleonard proposed to most courts of Christendom, (and to that end himself studied Arabic,) that princes would join their strength, and scholars their brains, and all surprise them in their own land and language, at once besiege the Turk and his Alcoran, put him to the sword, and his religion to the touchstone; command him to Christianity with an high hand, and then to shew him the reasonableness of our commands. Thus also may we complain, but not wonder that the Reformation gets ground so slow in Christendom, because the forces and potent abettors of the papacy secure

them from being led captive to Christ; as long as the pope is riveted so fast in his chair, and as long as the rulers take part with him, there shall be no doubt of the truth of their religion; unless it please God to back our arguments with steel, and to raise up kings and emperors to be our champions, we may question, but never confute his supremacy. Let us come with all the power and rhetoric of Paul and Barnabas, all the demonstrations of reason and Spirit, yet as long as they have such topics against us, as the authority of the rulers and Pharisees, we may dispute out our hearts, and preach out our lungs, and gain no proselytes; all that we shall get is but a scoff and a curse, a sarcasm and an anathema, in the words next after my text, "This people which ver. 49.
know not the law are cursed," there is no heed to be taken to such poor contemptible fellows. To bring all home to the business of the text, let Christ come with all the enforcement and violence and conviction of His Spirit, sublimity of His speech and miracles, all the power of rhetoric and rhetoric of His power, so that all that see or hear, bear witness that never man spake as this Man, yet all this shall be accounted but a delusion, but an enchantment of some seduced wretches, unless the great men or deep scholars will be pleased to countenance them. And it is much to be feared they are otherwise possessed, and rather than this shall not be followed, Christ shall be left alone; rather than they shall speak in vain, the Word itself shall be put to silence: and if they which were appointed to take and bring Him to judgment shall be caught by Him they came to apprehend, and turn their accusations into reverence, the Pharisees will not be without their reply, they are doctors in the law, and therefore for a need can be their own advocates: then answered the Pharisees, "Are ye also deceived, have any of the rulers and Pharisees believed on Him?"

Concerning the infidelity of the rulers in my text, as being not so directly appliable to my audience, I shall forbear to speak. My discourse shall retire itself to the Pharisee, as being a professor of learning, brought up at the university in Jerusalem, and God grant his vices and infidelity be not also academical.

The words we shall divide not into several parts, but con-

siderations, and read them either as spoken by the Pharisee, or recorded by the Evangelist. In the first we have the τὸ λογικὸν, the rational force of them, as they are part of an argument, that they which believed in Christ were deceived, *sub hac forma*;—he that would judge of the truth of his life, is to look which way the greatest scholars are affected, and then, though in that case it concluded fallaciously, yet the argument was probable, and the point worth our discussion; that the judgment of learning and learned men is much to be heeded in matters of religion.

In the second we have the τὸ φυσικὸν and τὸ ῥῆμα, the rational sense of the words being resolved, as affirmative interrogations are wont, into a negative proposition, "Have any," &c. The Pharisees did not believe on Him; i. e. the greatest scholars are not always the best Christians. And first of the first, the authority of learning and learned men in matters of religion, noted from the logical force of the words, "Have any," &c.

Amongst other acts of God's providence and wise economy of all things, there is not one more observable than the succession of His Church, and dispensation of His most precious gifts attending it; you shall not in any age find the flourishing of learning severed from the profession of religion; and the proposition shall be granted without exception: God's people were always the learnedest part of the world. Before the flood we are not so confident as to define and set down the studies and proficiency in all kinds of knowledge amongst those long-lived ancients; how far soever they went, belongs little to us. The deluge made a great chasm betwixt us, and it would be hard for the liveliest eyes to pierce at such distance through so much water; let those who fancy the two pillars[a], in which all learning was engraven, the one of brick, the other of marble, to prevent the malice either of fire or water, please themselves with the fable, and seem to have deduced all arts from Adam. Thus far it is agreed on, that in those times every father being both a priest and a king in his own family, bestowed on his son all knowledge both secular and sacred, which himself had attained to: Adam by tradition instructing Seth, and Seth Enoch, in all knowledge

[a] [Josephus Antiq. Jud., lib. i. c. 2. § 3.]

as well as righteousness. For it is Josephus's[b] observation, that whilst Cain and his progeny employed themselves about wicked and illiberal inventions, grovelling upon the earth, Seth and his bore up their thoughts as well as eyes towards heaven, and observed the course and discipline of the stars; wherein it was easy to be exquisite, every man's age shewing him the several conjunctions and oppositions and other appearances of the luminaries, and so needing no successors to perfect his observations. Hence Philo[c] calls Abraham *ἄνδρα μετεωρολογικὸν*, and says his knowledge in astronomy led him to the notice of a Deity, and that his sublime speculation gave him the name of Abram, a high exalted father, before his faith had given the better compellation of Abraham, father of many nations: hence from him, 1. Chaldæa, 2. Egypt, 3. Greece, came all to the skill they brag of; so that Proclus made a good conjecture, that the wisdom of the Chaldæans was *θεόδοτος καὶ θεοπαράδοτος*, "a gift of some of the gods," it coming from Abraham, who was both a friend and in a manner an acquaintance of the true God, and far ancienter and wiser than any of their false. In sum, all learning as well as religion was pure and classical only among the Hebrews, as may appear by Moses in his *ἑξάμερον*, the only true natural philosophy that ever came into the world; so that even Longinus[d], which took the story of the creation to be a fable, yet commends Moses' expression of it, "Let there be light, and there was light," [Gen. i. 3.] for a speech admirably suited to a god, for the greatest *ὕψος* or sublimity that any rhetorician could strain for. And Demetrius Phalereus[e] commends the Pentateuch to Ptolemy, *ὡς φιλοσοφωτέραν καὶ ἀκέραιον, κ.τ.λ.*, "as the most philosophical, accurate discourse he had ever heard of." And if by chance any scraps or shreds of knowledge were ever scattered among the Gentiles, they certainly fell from the Chaldæans' table: from whence in time the poor beggarly world gathered such basketsful, that they began to feed full, and be in good liking, and take upon them to be richer than their benefactors, and Athens at last begins

[b] [Ibid., §§ 2, 3.]

[c] [Philo Jud., De Abrahamo, p. 361, E.]

[d] [Longinus, De Sublim., quoted above, p. 300.]

[e] [Demetr. Phal. ap. Euseb. Præpar. Evang., lib. viii. 3. p. 351, b.]

to set up as the only university in the world. But it is Austin's observation[f], that it was in respect of Christ, and for the propagation of the Church, that learning was ever suffered to travel out of Jewry. Christ was to be preached and received among the Gentiles, and therefore they must be civilized beforehand, lest such holy things being cast abruptly before swine, should only have been trampled on: or as Moses' books falling among the poets, have been only distorted into fables, turned also into prodigies, metamorphoses, and mythical divinity. *Cum enim prophetæ, &c.*, "under Abraham and Moses, whilst the learning and the sermons of the prophets were for Israel's use, the heathen world was as ignorant as irreligious;" but about Romulus' time, when the prophecies of Christ, which belonged also to the Gentiles, were no longer whispered, but proclaimed by the mouth of Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, Micah, and Jonas from the reign of Uzziah to Hezekiah, kings of Judah, then also began learning to flourish abroad among the nations, to dilate itself over the world: Greece began to hearken after wisdom, and brag of its σοφοὶ, Thales and the like, *ut fontes divinæ et humanæ sapientiæ pariter erupisse videantur*, that then secular knowledge might dare to shed itself among the nations, when Christ began to be revealed, the expectation of the Gentiles. It were an infinite discourse to present unto you the like proceedings through all ages, the continual marriages, the combinations, and never any divorce betwixt learning and religion. The fathers before mentioned are large in drawing it down to our hands in tables of collateral descent throughout all generations; and I hope the present state of the world will sufficiently avouch it. For what is all the beggarly skill of the Arabians in physics and the mathematics, all the cabalisms of the Jews; in sum, all the rather folly than wisdom, that either Asia or Africa pretend to? what hath all the world beside that dare look a Christian in the face? I doubt not but this corner of Europe where we live, may challenge and put to shame, nay upbraid the ignorance of the learnedest Mahometan, and be able to afford some champions which shall grapple with the tallest giant, with the proudest son of Anak that Italy can boast of. I will

[f] [S. Augustin. De Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. 27.]

hope and pray, and again dare to hope, that as all Europe hath not more moderation and purity of religion than this kingdom, so it never had a more learned clergy; never more encouragement for learning from religion; never more advantages to religion from learning. But all this while we hover in the air, we keep upon the wing, and talk only, *καθόλου*, at large and *in thesi:* we must descend lower to the *καθέκαστον* and *hypothesis* here; where heed is to be taken to the Pharisee, to the doctor, in my text. The disciples were but fishermen and mechanics, illiterate enough, and yet a word of theirs shall more sway mine assent, and rule my faith, than the proudest dictates out of Moses' chair. And thus indeed are we now-a-days ready to repose as much trust in the shop as in the schools, and rely more on the authority of one lay-professor, than the sagest elders in theirs or our Israel. Learning is accounted but an ostentatious complement of young scholars, that will never bring the pastor or his flock the nearer to the way toward heaven. But to recal our judgments to a milder temper, we are to learn from Clemens[g], that although the wisdom of God, and doctrine of the gospel, be *αὐτοτελὴς καὶ ἀπροσδεὴς*, able to maintain, and fence, and authorize itself, yet even philosophy and secular learning is of use, nay necessity, to defeat the treacheries, and sophisms, and stratagems of the adversary: and although the truth of Scripture be the bread we live on, the main staff and stay of our subsistence; yet this exoterical learning, *τὰ θύραθεν μαθήματα*, as Sophronius calls them, this *προπαίδεια* of the schools, must be served in *ὡς παροψήματα καὶ τραγήματα*, as cates and dainties to make up the banquet; nay they are not only for superfluity, but solid and material uses. It was a custom of old, saith Dionysius Halicarnensis[h], to build cities, *συνεχεῖς ἐπὶ τοῖς ὄρεσι*, never far from some hill, or mountain, that beside the natural strength, the hold from the foundation, they may receive some security and safeguard from so stout and tall a neighbour: thus will it stand us upon, so to build our faith upon a rock, that we may also have some shelter near us to fence and fortify our fabric, when the wind or tempest shall arise.

[g] [Clemens Alexand. Strom., lib. i. cap. 20. § 100. p. 377.]
[h] [Dionys. Halicarn. Hist., lib. i. c. 9.]

Had not Peter, indeed, and the rest at Christ's call left their ignorance with their nets and trades, had they not been made scholars as well as disciples, all trades promiscuously might justly have challenged and invaded the pulpit, and no man denied to preach that was able to believe. But you are to know that their calling was an inspiration, they were furnished with gifts as well as graces; and whatever other learning they wanted, sure I am they were the greatest linguists in the world. Yea, the power and convincing force of argument, which the heathen observed in Peter[i], made them get the oracles to proclaim that he had learnt magic from his Master. To drive the whole business to an issue, in brief, take it in some few propositions.

1. There is not so great a dependence betwixt learning and religion in particular persons, as we have observed to be in ages and countries: so that though plenty of knowledge be a symptom or judiciary sign, that that Church where it flourishes is the true Church of God, yet it is no necessary argument, that that man where it in special resides, is the sincerest Christian; for upon these terms is the wisest man, the scribe, the disputer of the world, the loudest braggers of Jews or Grecians are found guilty of spiritual ignorance, as the last part of our discourse shall make evident.

2. Matters of faith are not *ultimo resolubilia in principia rationis*, therefore not to be resolved any further than the Scriptures; they are not to beg authority from any other science; for this is the true metaphysics, *ἀρχικωτάτη καὶ ἡγεμονικωτάτη*, the mistress and commandress of all other knowledges, which must perpetually do their homage to it, as servants always to attend and confirm its proposals, never to contradict it, as Aristotle hath it[j].

3. Though faith depend not upon reason, though it subsist entirely upon its own bottom, and is then most purely faith when it relies not on reason, and adheres wholly to the *αὐτοπιστία* of God's word, yet doth the concurrence, and agreement, and evidence of reason add much to the clearness, and beauty, and splendour of it: takes away all fears and jealousies, and suspicious surmisings out of the understanding, and

[i] [S. August. De Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. c. 53.]
[Aristot. Metaph. B. c. ii.]

bestows a resolution and constancy on it. For faith, though in respect of its ground, God's word, it be most infallible, yet in its own nature is, as the philosopher defines it, a kind of opinion, and in our human frailty subject to demurs, and doubts, and panic terrors, for fear it be false grounded, and therefore Aristotle saith of it, that it differs from knowledge *ὡς νοσώδης ὑγιεινοῦ*, "as a sickly man from a strong," it is very weak and aguish, subject to sweats and colds, and hourly distempers: whereas the evidence and assurance of sense and reason added to it, bestows a full health and strength upon it, an *ἀθλητικὴ ἕξις*, a perfect state that it shall never be forced or frighted out of. In brief, where reason gives its suffrage, it unveils faith, and to adherence superadds evidence, and teaches us to feel, and touch, and handle what before we did believe; to gripe, and hold, and even possess what before we apprehended: and these are believers in a manner elevated above an earthly condition, initiated to the state which is all vision, where every thing is beheld *γυμνὸν καὶ τετραχηλισμένον*, "naked and displayed," as the entrails of a creature cut down the back; or with "open face, beholding as in a glass." [Heb. iv. 13.] 2 Cor. iii. 28.

4. There be some difficulties in religion at which an illiterate understanding will be struck in a maze; some depths of mystery where an elephant can scarce tread water, a lamb must not hope to wade; many above the apprehensions of the most capacious brain, where reason being not able to express, must be content to shadow and describe in some rude lines what it cannot perform in portraiture: and here, I say, learning, though it cannot reach, yet can heave up and point at; profit, though not perfect us; help us to some images and resemblances, to conceive that which we cannot fully comprehend: so saith Philoponus[k], will mathematical abstractions facilitate the simplicity of God's essence to our understandings, the lucid nature of the sun express the brightness of his glory, and the mysterious numbers of the Pythagoreans represent the Trinity to our fancies. And thus doth Zoroaster in Patricius[l], *philosophari de Deo*, subdue, as it were, divinity

[k] [Philoponus in Aristot. De Anima, f. 2. (Aldus.)]

[l] Patricius, [Zoroaster, p. 6. Venice. 1593. from Psellus' Expositio Dogmatum quæ sunt apud Assyrios.]

to reason, and raise up reason to join issue with divinity, and by his *πατρικὸς βύθος ἐκ τρίων συγκείμενος τριάδων*, "that paternal depth made of three threes," comprise all the secrets of the Godhead. But besides these secrets of the upper cabinet, these supernatural depths, there are others *secundæ altitudinis*, and as Halicarnensis[m] calls those which are above the reach of all but philosophers, *φυσικὰ θαύματα*, and Aristotle[n] *θαυμαζόμενα κατὰ φύσιν*, "natural miracles," which none but scholars can attain to. And these I hope shall never be discussed upon a shopboard, or enter into any brain that is not before well ballast with weight and substance at the bottom: I need not name them to you, you may know them by this, that when they come into an empty brain, they breed winds, and turn all into vertigoes and dizziness. There be yet further lights of a third magnitude, which yet every one hath not eyes to gaze on, and of this condition are almost all the speculations in divinity; nay, the ordinariest truth in a catechism can scarce be forced into a vulgar understanding; his brain is not set that way, and many of our subtlest worldlings have mistaken the Virgin Mary for an angel, and the Apostles' Creed, where only they find mention of her, for a prayer: and then you cannot imagine what stead a little learning would stand these men in, what even miracles it would work upon them.

5. It is but necessity and exigence of nature that those which are the weak should apply themselves for help and directions to those that are stronger; the child in a cradle must be put to a nurse, which may give it suck till it be able to eat, and for a while bear it in her arms, that it may be taught to go. There be in nature, saith Aristotle[o] in his Mechanics, many wants; she performs not all our needs, and therefore engines were invented to supply defects. Thus is art a *machina* or invention, *πρὸς τὰς τοιαύτας ἀπορίας βοηθοῦν μέρος*, to furnish us with those abilities which nature was a niggard in: and therefore to deprive ourselves of this guidance when it is offered, is *μονόφθαλμον τυφλοῦν*[p], to put out an eye of his that hath but one in all, which was of old

[m] [*πρᾶγμα κρεῖττον λόγον τοῖς ἀθεάτοις ὧν ἡ φύσις δρᾷ, καὶ θαυμάτων οὐδενὸς δεύτερον.*—Dionys. Halicar., lib. i. cap. 15. ad fin.]

[n] [Aristot. Mechanica. ad init.]

[o] [Id., ibid.]

[p] [Id. Rhet. i. cap. 7. ad fin.]

a great aggravation to the injury in the Rhetoric, indeed to leave ourselves desperately blind. *Περὶ πυθαγορείων ἀνεὺ φωτὸς μὴ λάλει*, in Jamblichus[q], in matters of religion we must not so much as speak, nay, not think without a candle; we shall want the guidance of some teacher to direct every such word out of our mouths, or thought into our hearts. An ignorant man must not have leave so much as to meditate on God without a guide; for he is mad, say the philosophers[r], and then every thought of his will be a kind of delirium or frenzy. "It is the law of nature," saith the historian[s], *ἄρχειν ἡττόνων τοὺς κρείττονας*, "that superiors should have a kind of sovereignty over all that are inferior to them," a *magisterium* and command over them, to rule and order them; and this superiority and sovereignty hath the learned pastor, or generally the scholar, over all ignorant men, be they never so rich or potent; and whosoever denies or scorns thus to obey, I say not, is to be slain—as the law was in the ancient wars —*ἀκρίτως*, without an assizes, but to be condemned of much peevishness and more stupidity, and his punishment is, let him fall into his own hands, i. e. be ruled by a fool or madman.

6. Much of the speculative part of religion may be had from a Pharisee as well as a disciple. Christ Himself bears witness of him, that he was orthodox in matters concerning the law: "They sit in Moses' chair, and therefore whatsoever they bid you, that observe and do." They err indeed in prescribing their additions to duty, as divine command, but the chief obliquity was in their lives: they were heretics, nay apostates from their doctrine, and therefore "do not after their works, for they say and do not." If I am resolved of such a man's abilities in learning, but see him a scandalous liver, I will borrow of his gifts, and pray God to increase his graces. In matters of spiritual joy and sorrow, I will, if I can, be counselled by an heart which once was broken, that I may see how he recovered, and repair my breaches by a pattern; and yet even these things may be learnt from him which never had them but in his speculation; as the physician may cure a disease, though himself was never sick of it.

Mat. xxiii. 3.

ver. 4.

[q] Jamblichus, [De Vita Pythagoræ, cap. xxiii. § 105.]

[r] [Clemens Alexand. Protrept. § 122. p. 94. ed. Potter.]

[s] [Dionys. Halicar., lib. i. c. 5.]

But for the ordinary theories of religion, I will have patience to receive instructions from any one, and not examine his practices, but in modesty, and in submission, and humility receive the law at his mouth. But all this with caution, ὡς ἡγεμόνι, οὐ δεσπότῃ, "as to a guide, not a monarch" of my faith; rule he shall my belief, but not tyrannize over it. I will assent to my teacher till I can disprove him, but adhere, and anchor, and fix myself on the Scripture.

7. In matters of superstruction, where Scripture lays the foundation, but interpreters, i. e. private spirits, build upon it, some gold, some stubble, &c., and I cannot judge or discern which is firmliest rooted on the foundation; I will take the philosopher's counsel in the first of his Rhetoric [t], and observe either τὶ παλαιοὶ or πρόσφατοι, be guided either by the ancientest, if they have shewed themselves in the cause, or else men alive, which be best reputed of for integrity and judgment: I shall scarce trust the honestest man you can commend to me, unless I have some knowledge of his parts; nor the learnedest you can cry up, unless I can believe somewhat in his sincerity.

8. All the contradictions and new ways of my own brain opposite or wide from the current of the learned, I must suspect for a work of my own fancy, not entitle them to God's Spirit in me. *Verebar omnia opera mea,* saith Job, whatever a man can call his own, he must be very cautious and jealous over it. For it is no less than atheism which the scorners of the last age are to fall upon by "walking after their own lusts." And thus was the Pharisee's practice here, who makes use of his own authority to deny Christ; it was the Pharisees that said, "Have any of the Pharisees believed on Him?" There is not a more dangerous mother of heresies in the midst of piety than this one, that our fancy first assures us that we have the Spirit, and then that every fancy of ours is *theopneust,* the work of the Spirit. There are a multitude of deceits got altogether here; 1. We make every idle persuasion of our own the evidence of God's Spirit, then we join infallibility to the person, being confident of the gift; then we make every breath of our nostrils, and flame that can break out of our hearts, an immediate effect of the

[Job ix. 28.]

2 Pet. iii. 3.

[t] [Arist. Rhet., lib. i. c. 15. § 13.]

Spirit, and fire which hath spiritually enlivened us, and then we are sure it is authentical; and all this while we never examine either the ground or deductions from it, but take all upon trust from that everlasting deceiver, our own heart, which we ought to sit upon, and judge of by proofs and witnesses, by comparing it with other men's dictates, probably as godly, perhaps more learned, but certainly more impartial judges of thee, than thou canst be of thyself.

Lastly, if the word of God speak distinctly and clearly; enforce, as here by miracles done before all men to their astonishment and redargution, then will I not stay my belief to wait on or follow the learnedest man in the world: when Christ Himself speaks to my eyes, the proudest, eminentest Pharisee in earth or hell, nay if any of their sect have crowded into heaven, shall not be able to charm my ear or lay any clog upon my understanding. So that you see the Pharisee's argument in that case was sophistical,—the matter being so plain to them that they needed no advice, "His works bore witness of Him,"—yet in the general it holds probable, and learning remains a good guide still, though an ill master in matters of religion; ὅπερ ἔδει δεῖξαι, the first thing we undertook to demonstrate. John v. 36.

And this we should draw down yet lower to our practice, and that variously, but that almost every proposition insisted on hath in part spoken to your affections, and so prevented store of uses. This only must not be omitted; for scholars to learn to set a value on their precious blessing which God hath vouchsafed them above all the world beside, to bless God infinitely that they understand and conceive what they are commanded to believe; this I am sure of, there is not a greater or more blessed privilege, besides God's Spirit, which our human condition is capable of, than this of learning, and specially divine knowledge, of which Aristotle[u] himself witnesseth, ἀμείνων δὲ οὐδεμία, "none is better than it." As long as we have no evidence or demonstration from that which yet it most nearly concerns us to rely upon, we cannot enjoy, without an immediate supernatural irradiation, a tranquillity and consistency of spirit; we cannot peremptorily have resolved ourselves that we have built upon the rock; every

[u] [Aristot. Metaph. A. c. 2. prope finem.]

temptation proves a discouragement to us, many horrors take hold of us, and sometimes we must needs fall to that low ebb, not far from despair, which the Apostles were in, "We had trusted," but now we know not what to think of it, "that this was He that should have redeemed Israel." But to see all the articles of my faith ratified and confirmed to my understanding, to see the greatest treasure and inheritance in the world sealed and delivered to me in my hand, written in a character and language that I am perfectly skilled in; O what a comfort is this to a Christian soul! O what a fulness of joy to have all the mysteries of my salvation transcribed out of the book of the Lord, and written in my heart, where I can turn and survey, and make use of them, as much and as often as I will! nay, where I have them without book, though there were neither father nor Bible in the world, able out of my own stock to give an account, nay, a reason of my faith, before the perversest papist, heathen, or devil. This serves me instead of having lived, and conversed, and been acquainted with Christ. By this I have my fingers put into the print of the nails, and my hands thrust into His side, and am as sure as ever Thomas was; I see Him as palpably as he that handled Him, that He is my "Lord and my God."

Luke xxiv. 22.

It was observed by the philosopher[x] as an act generally practised among tyrants to prohibit all schools and means of learning and education in the commonwealth, *μήτε παιδείαν, μήτε σχολὰς, μήτε συλλόγους σχολαστικοὺς*, "to suffer neither learning, nor schools, nor common meetings," that men being kept blind might be sure to obey, and tyrannical commands through ignorance be mistaken for fair government. And thus did Julian interdict the Christians all manner of literature, and chiefly philosophy, "for fear," saith Nazianzen[y], "they should be able to grapple with the heathen," and cut off Goliah's head with his own weapon. The continuance of these arts of spiritual tyranny you may observe, in the prescribed stupidity and commanded ignorance of the laity through all Italy. All which must call for a superlative measure of thanks to be expressed, not in our tongues and hearts only, but in our

[x] [Aristot. Polit., lib. v. c. 11.]
[y] S. Gregor. Nazianz. [Oratio iv. §§ 4, 5. Op., tom. i. pp. 79, D. 80, A.]

lives and actions; from us I say, who have obtained not only a knowledge of His laws, but almost a vision of His secrets, and forasmuch as concerns our eternal bliss, do even see things as they were acted, have already comprehended in our reason—not only in our faith—the most impossible things in nature; the breadth and length and depth and height of the conceived, incarnate, and crucified God; and if all that will not serve our turn, but we must press into His cabinet secrets, invade the Book of Life, and oversee and divulge to all men *abscondita Domini Dei nostri*,—then are God's mercies unworthily repaid by us, and those indulgences which were to bestow civility upon the world, have only taught us to be more rude. In sum, the realest thanks we can perform to God for this inestimable prize, is modestly and softly to make use of it; 1. To the confirming of others' faith, and 2. to the expressing of our own. For, 1, he is the deepest scholar, saith the philosopher, who is διδασκαλικώτερος, "best able to teach" other men what himself conceives[z]: and then, 2, he hath the habit most radicated who hath pressed it down into his heart, and there sowed a seed which shall increase and fructify, and spread, and flourish, laden with the fruits of a lively faith. He is the truest scholar that hath fed upon learning, that hath nourished, and grown, and walked, and lived in the strength of it. And till I see you thrive and bestir yourselves like Christians, I shall never envy your learning: the Pharisees were great scholars, well seen in the prophets, and it is much to be suspected could not choose but find Christ there, and acknowledge Him by His miracles; they saw Him plain enough, and yet not a man would believe on Him:—my second part—the greatest scholars are not always the best Christians. [Deut. xxix. 29.]

It is observable in the temper of men, that the cowardly are most inquisitive; their fears and jealousies make them very careful to foresee any danger, and yet for the most part they have not spirit enough to encounter, and they are so stupid and sluggish that they will not get out of its way when they have foreseen it: the same baseness and timorousness makes them a sort of men most diligent at a distance to avoid, and near hand most negligent to prevent. Thus

[z] σημείων εἰδότος δύνασθαι διδάσκειν.—[Arist. Metaph. A. c. 1.]

Dan. iii. 5. in Dan. iii. 5, Nebuchadnezzar dreams and is affrighted, and a proclamation is made for all the wisdom of the world to come in and consult and sit upon it, and give their verdict for the interpretation of the dream, and when he had at last got the knowledge of it by Daniel, that his fears were not in vain, that the greatest judgment that ever was heard of was within a twelvemonth to fall on him, then, as though he had been a beast before his time, without all understanding, he goes and crowns himself for his slaughter. Just when, according to the prophecy, he was to suffer, then was he walking in his pride; whilst he was ignorant, he was sensible of his danger, and now he sees it before his eyes, he is most
ver. 25. prodigiously blind. "At the end of twelve months, when his ruin was at hand, he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon, and the king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon that I have built," &c. In brief, he that was most earnest to understand the dream, is most negligent of the event of it, and makes no other use of his knowledge of God's will, but only more knowingly and wilfully to contemn it. And this generally is the state of corrupt nature, to keep a distance and a bay betwixt our knowledge and our wills, and when a truth hath fully conquered and got possession of our understanding, then to begin to fortify most strongly, that the other castle of the soul, the affections, may yet remain impregnable. Thus will the devil be content to have the outworks and the watch-tower taken, so he may be sure to keep his treasure within from danger: and will give us leave to be as great scholars as himself, so we will continue as profane. And so we are like enough to do for all our knowledge; for wisdom, saith Aristotle[a], is terminated in itself, *οὐδεμιᾶς γάρ ἐστι γενέσεως*, "it neither looks after, nor produces any practical good," saith Andronicus[b], *οὐ γὰρ τέλος ἔχει πρακτὸν ἀγαθὸν*, nay, there is no dependence betwixt knowing and doing; as he that hath read and studied the *ἀθλητικὰ* may perhaps be never the better wrestler, nor the skilfullest physician the more healthy; experience and trial must perfect the one, and a good temperature constitute the other. A young man may be a good naturalist, a good geometer, nay a wise man, because he may understand *θαυ-*

[a] [Aristot. Nic. Ethic., lib. vi. c. 13.] [b] [Andronicus, Paraphr. in loc.]

μαστὰ, χαλεπὰ, δαιμόνια[c], "wonders, depths," nay, "divine matters," but he will never be φρόνιμος, "prudent" or actually virtuous, i. e. a good moralist: τὰ μὲν οὐ πιστεύουσιν οἱ νεοὶ, ἀλλὰ λέγουσιν[d], moral precepts they cannot be said to believe, they have not entered so far, they float only in their memories, they have them by heart, they say them over by rote, as children do their catechism, or Plato's scholars (saith Plutarch) his depths of philosophy; they now recite them only, and shall then understand them, when they come of age, when they are staid enough to look into the meaning of them, and make use of them in their practice. The mathematics, saith Aristotle[e], having nothing to do with the end or chief good that men look after, never any man brought good or bad, better or worse into a demonstration; there is no consultation or election there, only plain downright diagrams, necessary convictions of the understanding. And therefore for these mere speculations, which hover only in the brain, the youngest wit is nimblest; for δεινότης[f], "sharpness of apprehension" is a sprightfulness of the mind, and is there liveliest where there be most spirits: but prudence and active virtue requires an habituate temper of passions, a staidness of the mind, and long trial and experience of its own strength, ■ constancy to continue in virtue in spite of all foreign allurements or inward distempers. And the ground of all this is, that those things that most encumber the will and keep us from practice, do nothing clog or stop the understanding; sensuality or pleasure hinders us not from knowing ὅτι τὸ τρίγωνον[g], κ.τ.λ., that ■ "triangle hath three angles equal to two right ones," and the like. Nay the most insolent tyrannizing passions which domineer over us, which keep us in awe, and never suffer us to stir, or move, or walk, or do any thing that is good, will yet give us leave to understand as much as we would wish; they have only fettered our hands and feet, have not blinded our eyes; as one shut up in the tower from the conversation of men, may be yet the greatest proficient in speculation;

[c] [Aristot. Nic. Eth., lib. vi. c. 7.]
[d] [Ibid., c. 9.]
[e] [Met., B. c. 2.]
[f] [φυσικὴ ἐπιτηδειότης τῆς ψυχῆς. So δεινότης is defined by Andronicus in his paraphrase on the words σκεπτέον δὲ πάλιν καὶ περὶ τῆς ἀρετῆς.—Ethic. Nic. vi. 13.]
■ [Arist. Eth. Nic., lib. vi. c. 5.]

the affections being more gross and corporeous,—from thence called the heels of the soul,—and so easily chained and fettered; but the understanding most pure and spiritual, and therefore uncapable of shackles, nay, is many times most free and active, when the will is most dead and sluggish. And this may be the natural reason that even Aristotle[1] may teach us why the greatest scholars are not always the best Christians,—the Pharisees well read in the prophets, yet backwardest to believe,—because faith which constitutes a Christian is a spiritual prudence, as it is best defined, and therefore is not appropriate to the understanding; but, if they be several faculties, is rather seated in the will; the objects of faith being not merely speculative, but always apprehended and assented to *sub ratione boni*, as being the most unvaluable blessings which ever we desired of the Lord, or can require. The speculative part of divine wisdom may make us δαίμονας, "intelligent spirits," nay, possibly do it in the worst notion, render us "devils." Real practical knowledge only,—prudence,—will make angels, ministering spirits unto God, teach us to live and be better than we did. So then, in the first place, learning doth neither make nor suppose men Christians: nay, secondly, it doth *per accidens* many times hinder, put a rub in our way, and keep us from being Christians. Philoponus and Synesius—miracles of learning—were therefore hardest to be converted, they were so possessed and engaged in peripatetical philosophy, that however they might be persuaded to the Trinity, they will not believe the resurrection. It was too plain a contradiction to philosophical reason ever to enter theirs. Thus in the 1 Cor. i. 21, "the world by wisdom knew not God:" they so relied on their reason, and trusted in it for all truths, that they concluded every thing impossible that would not concur with their old principles. But this resistance which reason makes is not so strong but that it may easily be suppressed, and therefore Synesius was made a bishop before he explicitly believed the resurrection, because they were confident that he which had forsaken all other errors, would not long continue perverse in this, and so good a Christian in other things, οὐκ ἄν οὐκ ἐλλαμφθείη, could not choose

1 Cor. i. 21.

[περιττὰ μὲν καὶ θαυμαστὰ, κ.τ.λ.—Arist. Eth. Nic., lib. vi. c. 7.]

but be illuminated in time, in so necessary a point of faith: and indeed so it happened in them both.

But there are other more dangerous engines, more insidious courses which learning uses to supplant or undermine belief; other stratagems to keep us out of the way, to anticipate all our desires or inclinations or thoughts that way-ward; and these are spiritual pride and self-content. Men are so elevated in height of contemplation, so well pleased, so fully satisfied in the pleasures and delights of it, that the first sort scorn to submit or humble themselves to the poverty and disparagement of believing in Christ; the second are never at leisure to think of it. For the first, spiritual pride, it is set down as a reason that "the natural man receives not the things of the spirit," receives them not, i. e. will not take them, will not accept of them, though they are freely given him; "for they are foolishness unto him," i. e. so his proud brain reputes them. The pride of worldly wisdom extremely scorns the foolishness of Christ, and consequently is infinitely opposite to faith, which is wrought by special humility. 1 Cor. ii. 14.

Secondly, for self-content: *σοφοὶ μὴ δεόνται φίλων*, saith Heraclitus in Hesychius[k], "Wise men need no friends," they are able to subsist by themselves without any help; they will have an happiness of their own making, and scorn to be beholding to Christ for a new inheritance, they are already so fully possessed of all manner of contents. Let any man whisper them of the joys of the new Jerusalem, of the Intercessor that hath saved, of the way thither and made it passable, of all the privileges and promises of our adoption, they will hear them *ὡσεὶ λῆρα*, "as old wives' fables;" they have the fortunate islands too, their exactest tranquillity and serenity of mind in a perpetual contemplation, and all the golden apples in paradise shall not tempt or alarm them out of it. It is strange to see when such a man is called, what ado there is to get him out of his dream, to hale him out of his study to the church, how sleepy, and drowsy, and lethargical he is in matters of religion; how soon a little devotion hath tired him out, that could have pored over a book incessantly all his life long, and never thought thus to have been inter-

[k] [This is a dictum of Theodorus, surnamed Ἄθεος. *τοὺς δὲ σοφοὺς αὐτάρκεις ὑπάρχοντας, μὴ δεῖσθαι φίλων.*— Hesychius, De Claris Viris, s. v. Theodorus; ap. Meursium, Op., tom. vii. p. 253.]

dicted the delights of human learning, thus to have been plucked and torn from the embraces of his Athenian idol. His conversion is much unlike another man's; that which calls others into compass seems to let him loose, thrusts him abroad into the world, teaches him to look more like a man than ever he meant, makes him a member of the commonwealth that was formerly but an anchorite, and forces him to walk and run the way of God's commandments, that had once decreed himself to a chair for ever. In brief, there is as little hopes of one that indulges himself, and gives himself up to the pride and contents of any kind of learning, of him that terminates knowledge either in itself or else in the ostentation of it, as of any other that is captived to any one single worldly or fleshly kind of voluptuousness. This of the brain, in spite of the philosopher, is an intemperance, as well as that of the throat and palate, and more dangerous, because less suspected, and seldomer declaimed against; and from this epicurism, especially of the soul, good Lord deliver us.

Not to heap up reasons of this too manifest a truth,—would God it were not so undeniable,—take but this one more, of the unsufficiency of learning never so well used to make a man a Christian. Let all the knowledge in the world, profane and sacred, all the force and reason that all ages ever bragged of, let it concur in one brain, and swell the head as big as his was in the poem, that travailed of Minerva: let all Scriptures and fathers join their power and efficacy, and they shall never by their simple activity produce a saving faith in any one; all the miracles they can work are only on the understanding; the will, distinctly taken, is above their sphere or compass; or if their faculties are not distinguished, "and to will is present with me," as well as to understand, yet they can produce only an absolute simple general will, that is, an assent and approbation of the absolute goodness of the thing proposed, not a resolute will to abandon all other worldly purposes to perform that which I will. Knowledge and right apprehension of things may convince me first of the history, that all that is spoken of or by Christ, is true, and then of the expedience to apply all His merits to my soul, but when I see all this cannot be done

Rom. vii. 18.

without paying a price, without undoing myself, without pawning all that I have, my learning, my wealth, my delights, my whole worldly being, without self-denial, then the general assent, that absolute will, is grown chill and dead; we are still—whatever we believe—but infidels; all the articles of the Creed thus assented to are not enough to make us Christians. So that the issue of all is,—all knowledge in the world cannot make us deny ourselves, and therefore all knowledge in the world is not able to produce belief; only the Spirit must breathe this power into us of breathing out ourselves, He must press our breasts, and stifle, and strangle us; we must give up the natural ghost, He must force out our earthly breath out of our earthly bodies, or else we shall not be enlivened by His spiritual. Thus have you reasons of the common divorce betwixt knowledge and faith, i. e. the no manner of dependence betwixt them in nature. Secondly, the open resistance in some points betwixt reason and Scripture. Thirdly, the more secret reluctancies betwixt the pride and contents of learning and the Spirit. And lastly, the insufficiency of all natural knowledge, and transcendency of spiritual, so that he "cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned." I should now in very charity release you, but that there is one word behind of most important necessity to a sermon, and that is of application; [1 Cor. ii. 14.]

That laying to our hearts the important documents of the text, our righteousness and faith may exceed that of the Pharisees', our preaching and walking may be like that of Christ's, "in power and as having authority, and not as the scribes," and we not content with a floating knowledge in the brain, do press and sink it down into our inferior faculties, our senses and affections, till it arise in a full harvest of fruitful, diligently working faith. It was Zenophanes'[1] fancy, ὅλον ὁρᾶν Θεὸν, and that God was all eyes and all ears, but breathed not, there was no use of that in Him; and so is it with us, who are always exercising our knowledge, powers to see and hear whatever is possible; but for any breath of life in us, any motion of the Spirit, we have no use of it: it is not worth valuing or taking notice of, Mat. v. 20. Mat. vii. 29.

[1] [Xenophanes apud Diogen. Laert. ix. § 19.]

nothing so vulgar and contemptible in them that have it, nothing of which we examine ourselves so slightly, of which we are so easily mistaken, so willingly deceived, and nothing that we will be content to have so small a measure of. A little of it soon tires us out, it is too thin, airy, diet for us to live upon, we cannot hold out long on it; like the Israelites, soon satiated with their bread from heaven, nothing comparable to their old food that Nilus yielded them. "We remember the fish that we did eat in Egypt, but now our soul is dried away, there is nothing but this manna before our eyes;" as if that were not worth the gathering.

Numb. xi. 5.

Pythagoras could say, that if any one were to be chosen to pray for the people, to be made a priest, he must be a virtuous man, *ὡς θεῶν τούτοις προσεχόντων*, in Jamblichus, "because the gods would take more heed to his word[m]:" and again, that "many things might be permitted the people, which should be interdicted preachers[n]." It was the confirmation of his precepts by his life and practice, *σύμφωνος βίος*[o], that made Italy, *μέγας Ἕλλας*, all the country, his school[p], and all that ever heard him his disciples. Nothing will give such authority to our doctrine, or set such a value on our calling, as a religious conversation. He that takes such a journey, as that into holy orders, must go on, *ἀμεταστρεπτὶ*, according to his fifteenth Symbolum, must not return to his former sins as well as trade, saith Jamblichus[q]: the falling into one of our youthful vices, is truly a disordering of ourselves, and a kind of plucking our hands from the plough. A physician, saith Hippocrates[r], must have colour and be in flesh, *εὔχροός τε καὶ εὔσαρκος*, of a good promising healthy complexion, and then men will guess him a man of skill, otherwise the patient will bid the physician heal himself, and having by his ill look a prejudice against his physic, his fancy will much hinder its working. You need no application; he again will tell you, that the profession suffers not so much by any thing as by rash censures, and unworthy professors. In brief, our very knowledge will be set at nought, and our gifts scoffed at, if our lives do not demonstrate that we are Christians as well as

[m] De Vita Pyth., c. xi.
[n] Ibid., c. xxiv.
[o] Ibid., c. xxx.
[p] Ibid., c. vi.
[q] [Protrept. Symbol. xv.]
[r] [De Medico; ad init., tom. i. p. 56. Kühn.]

scholars. No man will be much more godly for hearing Seneca talk of providence, nor be affected with bare words, unless he see them armed and backed with power of him that utters them. Consider but this one thing, and withal, that my doctrine is become a proverb, and he is a proud man that can first draw it upon a scholar, his learning and his clergy make him never the more religious. O let our whole care and carriage, and the dearest of our endeavours, strive and prevail to cross the proverb, and stop the mouth of the rashest declaimer. That comedy of Aristophanes took best, which was all spent in laughing at Socrates, and in him involved and abused the whole condition of learning; though through Alcibiades' faction it miscarried and missed its applause once or twice, yet when men were left to their humour, it was admired and cried up extremely. Learning hath still some honourable favourers which keep others in awe with their countenance; but otherwise nothing more agreeable to the people than comedies or satires, or sarcasms dealt out against the universities: let us be sure that we act no parts in them ourselves, nor perform them before they are acted. Let us endeavour that theirs may be only pronunciations, a story of our faults as presented in a scene, but never truly grounded in any of our actions. One woe we are secure and safe from, "Woe be to you when all men shall speak well of you;" we have many good friends that will not let this curse light on us. O let us deliver ourselves from that catalogue of woes which were all denounced against the Pharisees for many vices, all contained in this accomplished piece, "Ye say but do not." And seeing all our intellectual excellencies cannot allure, or bribe, or woo God's Spirit to overshadow us, and conceive Christ, and bring forth true and saving faith in us; let all the rest of our studies be ordered in a new course; let us change both our method and our tutor, and having hitherto learnt God from ourselves, let us be better advised, and learn ourselves from God. Let us all study all learning from the spring or fountain, and make Him our instructor, who is the only author worth our understanding, and admit of no interpreter on Him but Himself. The knowledge of God shall be our vision in heaven, O let it be our speculation on

Luke vi. 26.

Mat. xxiii. 24.

earth. Let it fill every conceit or fancy that we at any time adventure on. It is *πάσης πραγματείας τελεσιούργημα*, the last work in which all the promises, all our possible designs are accomplished: O let us in part anticipate that final revelation of Him, lest so sudden and so full a brightness of glory be too excellent for the eyes of a saint: and labour to comprehend here, where the whole comfort of our life is, what we shall then possess. And if all the stretches, and cracking, and torturing of our souls will prevail, the dissolving of all our spirits, nay, the sighing out of our last breath will do any thing, let us join all this even that God hath given us, in this last real service to ourselves, and expire whilst we are about it, in praying, and beseeching, and importuning, and offering violence to that blessed Spirit, that He will fully enlighten and inflame us here with zeal as well as knowledge; that He will fill us with His grace here, and accomplish us with His glory hereafter.

Now to Him that hath elected us, hath created us, and redeemed us, &c.

SERMON XXIII.

MATT. x. 15.

It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

THE whole new covenant consists of these two words, Christ and faith; Christ bestowed on God's part, faith required on ours; Christ the matter, faith the condition of the covenant. Now to bring or present this faith before you, as an object for your understandings to gaze at, or to go further, to dissect—and with the diligence of anatomy instruct—in every limb, or joint, or excellency of it, were but to recall you to your catechism, and to take pains to inform you in that which you are presumed to know. The greater danger of us is, that we are behind in our practice; that we know what faith is, but do not labour for it; and therefore the seasonablest work will be on our affections, to produce, if it were possible, this precious virtue in our souls, and to sink and press down that floating knowledge which is in most of our brains, into a solid weighty effectual faith, that it may begin to be ἔργον πίστεως, "a work of faith," which was formerly but a fancy, dream, and apparition. [1 Thess. i. 3.] To this purpose to work on your wills, no rhetoric so likely as that which is most sharp and terrible, no such physic for dead affections as corrosives, the consideration of the dismal, hideous, desperate estate of infidels here in my text; and that both in respect of the guilt of the sin, and degree of the punishment proportioned to it, and that above all other sinners in the world, "It shall be more," &c. Where you ver. 4. may briefly observe, 1. the sin of infidelity, set down by its

subject, that city which would not receive Christ being
ver. 14. preached unto it; 2. the greatness of this sin, expressed by the punishment attending it; and that either positively, it shall go very sore with it, and therefore it is to be esteemed a very great sin, implied in the whole text; or else comparatively, being weighed with Sodom and Gomorrah in judgment, it shall be more tolerable for them than it: and therefore it is not only a great sin, but the greatest, the most damning sin in the world. And of these in order plainly, and to your hearts rather than your brains, presuming that you are now come with solemn serious thoughts to be edified, not instructed, much less pleased or humoured. And first of the first: the sin of infidelity, noted in the last words, "that city."

To pass by those which we cannot choose but meet with, 1. a multitude of ignorant infidels, pagans and heathens; 2. of knowing but not acknowledging infidels, as Turks and Jews; we shall meet with another order of as great a latitude, which will more nearly concern us; a world of believing infidels, which know and acknowledge Christ, the gospel and the promises, are as fairly mounted in the understanding part as you would wish, but yet refuse and deny Him in their hearts, apply not a command to themselves, submit not to Him, nor desire to make themselves capable of those mercies which they see offered by Christ in the world; and these are distinctly set down in the verse next before my text, "Whosoever shall not receive you," i. e. entertain the acceptable truth of Christ and the gospel preached by you, as it is interpreted by the fortieth verse, "He that receiveth you, receiveth Me," i. e. believes on Me, as the word is most plainly used,
Mat. xi. 14. Matt. xi. 14; "If you will receive it," i. e. if you will believe it,
John i. 12. "this is Elias which was for to come." And John i. 12; "To as many as received Him,—even to them that believe in His name." For you are to know that faith truly justifying is nothing in the world but the receiving of Christ. Christ and His sufferings and full satisfaction was once on the cross tendered, and is ever since by the gospel and its ministers offered to the world: and nothing required of us but a
John i. 22. hand and a heart to apprehend and receive: and to "as many as received Him, He gives power to become the sons of God." So that faith and infidelity are not acts properly de-

termined to the understanding, but indeed to the whole soul, and most distinctly to the will, whose part it is to receive or repel, to entertain or resist Christ and His promises, "the Author and Finisher of our salvation." Now this receiving of Christ is the taking or accepting of the righteousness of Christ, and so making it our own, as Rom. i. 17, being rightly weighed, will enforce. Read and mark, δικαιοσύνη γὰρ Θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ ἀποκαλύπτεται ἐκ πίστεως εἰς πίστιν, thus ἐν αὐτῳ "in it," or by it, the gospel, mentioned in the former verse; δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ ἐκ πίστεως, "the righteousness of God by faith," as Rom. iii. 22, i. e. the not legal but evangelical righteousness, which only God accepts, directly set down, Phil. iii. 9, "that righteousness which is through faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith;" ἀποκαλύπτεται εἰς πίστιν "is revealed to faith," is declared that we might believe; that finding no life or righteousness in ourselves, we may go out of ourselves, and lay hold on that which is offered us by Christ; and this you will find to be the clearest meaning of these words, though somewhat obscured in our English reading of them. Now the accepting of this righteousness is an act of ours following a proposal or offer of Christ's, and consummating the match or bargain between Christ and us. Christ is offered to us as an husband in the gospel; we enquire of Him, observe our own needs, and His excellencies and riches to supply them, our sins and His righteousness; and if upon advice we will take Him, the match is struck, we are our beloved's, and our beloved is ours; we are man and wife, we have taken Him for our husband, and with Him are entitled to all His riches: we have right to all His righteousness, and enjoy by His patent all the privileges, all the promises, all the mercies of the gospel. But if, the offer being thus made by God to give us His Son freely, we stand upon terms,—we are too rich, too learned, too worldly-minded, too much in love with the praise of men, i. e. fixed upon any worldly vanity, and resolve never to forego all these, to disclaim our worldly liberty, our own righteousness, and to accept of so poor an offer as a Christ; then are we the infidels here spoken of, "we will not come to Him that we might have life." When He is held out to us, we will not lay hold on Him, we have some conceit of ourselves, and therefore will not step a foot abroad

[Heb. xii. 2.] Rom. i. 17. Rom. iii. 22. Phil. iii. 9. John xii. 43. John v. 40.

to fetch His righteousness home to us. And indeed if any worldly thing please you; if you can set a value upon any thing else, if you can entertain a paramour, a rival, a compe-
John v. 44. titor in your hearts, if you can "receive the praise of men, how can you believe?" So that, in brief, infidelity consists in the not receiving of Christ with a reciprocal giving up of ourselves to Him, in the not answering affirmatively to Christ's offer of Himself, in the not taking home and applying Christ to our souls. And this is done, either by denying to take Him at all, or by taking Him under a false person, or by not performing the conditions required or presumed in the making of the match. They that deny to take Him at all, are the profane, negligent, presumptuous Christians, who either never hearken after Him, or else are so familiar with the news as to underprize Him: have either never cheapened heaven, or else
[Acts v. 2.] will not come to God's price; like Ananias and Sapphira, perhaps offer pretty fair, bring two parts of their estate and lay them at the Apostles' feet, but will give no more; fall off at last for a trifle, and peremptorily deny Christ if they may not have Him on their own conditions. Some superfluities, some vanities, some chargeable or troublesome sins, perhaps, they can spare, and those they will be inclinable to part withal; but if this will not serve, Christ must seek for a better chapman, they stand not much upon it, they can return as contentedly without it as they came. And this arises from a neglect and security, a not heeding or weighing of God's justice, and consequently undervaluing of His mercies. They have never felt God as an angry Judge, and therefore they now scorn Him as a Saviour: they have lived at such ease of heart, that no legal terror, no affrightments, or ghastly representations of sin can work upon them: and if the reading of the law, that killing letter, have been sent by God to instruct them in the desperateness of their estate, to humble these libertine souls to the spirit of bondage, and so school them to Christ, they have eyes, but see not, ears,
Rom. i. 28. but hear it not, they are come to this *νοῦς ἀδόκιμος*, "a reprobate sense," or as it may be rendered, "an undiscerning mind," not able to judge of that which is thus read and proposed to it; or again a sense without sense, not apprehensive of that which no man that hath eyes can be ignorant of; nay, in

Theodoret's phrase, *νοῦς ἀντίτυπος*, an heart that will reverberate any judgment or terror, receiving no more impression from it than the anvil from the hammer, violently return it again, smoothed somewhat over perhaps by often-beating, but nothing softened. Nay if the law cry too loud, and by an inward voice preach damnation in their bowels, and resolve to be heard before it cease; then do they seek out some worldly employment to busy themselves withal, that they may not be at home at so much unquietness: they will charm it with pleasures, or overwhelm it with business, as Cain, when his conscience was too rough and rigid for him, went out from the presence of the Lord, and as it is observed, "built cities," got some of his progeny to invent music, perhaps to still his tumultuous raving conscience, that the noise of the hammers and melody of the instruments might outsound the din within him, as in the sacrifices of Moloch, where their children, which they offered in an hollow brazen vessel, could not choose but howl hideously, they had timbrels and tabrets perpetually beating,—whereupon Tophet, where these sacrifices were kept, is by grammarians deduced from תוף *tympanum*[a],—to drown the noise of the children's cry; these, I say, which will not be instructed in their misery, or bettered by the preaching of the law, which labour only to make their inward terrors insensible, to skin, not cure, the wound, are infidels in the first or highest rank, which deny to take Him at all, will not suffer themselves to be persuaded that they have any need of Him; and therefore let Him be offered for ever, let Him be proclaimed in their ears every minute of their lives, they see nothing in Him worth hearkening after; and the reason is, they are still at home, they have not gone a foot abroad out of themselves, and therefore cannot lay hold on Christ. He that never went to school to the law, he that was never sensible of his own damned estate, he that never hated himself, *οὐ μὴ δέξεται*, "will never receive," never accept of Christ.

Gen. iv. 16. ver. 17. ver. 21. 2 Kings xxiii. 10.

Secondly, some are come thus far to a sense of their estate, and are twinged extremely, and therefore fly presently to the gospel; hearing of Christ, they fasten, are not patient of so much deliberation as to observe whether their hands be empty;

[a] Selden, De Diis Syriis. Syntagma i. cap. 6. [Op., tom. ii. p. 314.]

they are in distress, and Christ must needs save them suddenly; they lay hold as soon as ever they hear a promise, and are resolved to be saved by Christ, because they see otherwise they are damned. And these take Christ indeed, but under a false person; either they take the promises only, and let Christ alone, or take Christ the Saviour, but not Christ the Lord; are willing to be saved by Him, but never think of serving Him; are praying for ever for heaven and glory, but never care how little they hear of grace; the end they fasten on, the covenant they hug and gripe with their embraces, but never take the condition of repentance and obedience; this is not for their turn; they abstract the cheap and profitable attributes of Christ, His priestly office of satisfaction and propitiation, but never consider Him as a King; and so, in a word, lay hold of the estate before they have married the husband, which they have yet no more right to than a mere stranger; for the communicating the riches of a husband being but a consequence of marriage, is therefore not yet made over till the marriage—which is the taking of the husband's person—be consummate. And this, I say, is a second degree of infidelity, somewhat more secret and less discernible, when by an error of the person, by taking Christ the Saviour for Christ the Lord, or His promises abstracted from His person, we believe we shall be saved by Him, but deny to be ruled; desire to enjoy all the privileges, but subtract all the obedience of a subject.

In the third place, they which have accepted and received the true person of Christ as a Master, as well as a Jesus, they which have taken Him on a resolved vow of performing this condition of homage and obedience, are not in event as good as their engagements; when they think the match is fast, and past danger of recalling, when they seem to have gotten a firm title to the promises, and are in a manner entered upon the goods and estate of their husband, they do begin to break covenant, and either wholly subtract, or else divide their love; they married Him for His wealth, and now they have that, they are soon weary of His person; they came with the soul of an harlot, looking only what they should get by Him, and now they have many other old acquaintances they must needs keep league with; their self-denial, their

humility, their vows of obedience were but arts and stratagems that want and necessity put them upon, and now they have got their ends, all those are soon out-dated; they have faith and so are justified, and sure of their estate, and so now they may sin securely, "there is no condemnation to them, they are in Christ," and all the sins, nay, all the devils in the world shall never separate them. And this is a sanctified religious piece of infidelity in men, which think they have made sure of the main, and so never think of the consectaries; they have faith, and so it is no matter for good works; the lease is sealed, the wedding solemnized, and then never dream or care for covenants. And these men's fate is like to be the same spiritually, which we read of Samson's bodily strength; he vowed the vow of a Nazarite, and as long as he kept unshaven no opposition could prevail against him; but as soon as he broke his vow, when he had let his mistress cut his locks, his strength departed from him. All the promises and privileges of our being in Christ are upon condition of our obedience, and our vow being broken, the devil and the Philistines within us will soon deprive us of our eyes and life. Whatsoever livelihood we presume we have in Christ, we are deceived, we are still "dead in trespasses and sins." Thus do you see the three degrees of infidelity frequent amongst Christians, 1. a not taking Him at all, 2. a mistaking of His person; 3. a breaking of the covenants: now that you may abhor and fly from, and get out of each of them by a lively faith, my next particular shall warn you, the greatness of this sin, and that first positively in itself, "it shall be very intolerable for that city."

[Rom. viii. 1.]

[Judg. xvi. 19.]

[Eph. ii. 1.]

Faith may be conceived in a threefold relation, either to men, the subjects of it, and those sinners; or 2. to Christ, and His sufferings, the objects of it, with all the effects, remission of sins, and salvation attending it; or 3. to God the Father, the author and commander of it, as the only condition annexed to all His promises. And consequently infidelity, ἐκ παραλλήλου, shall be aggravated by these three depths or degrees, each adding to its exceeding sinfulness.

As faith respects its subject, and that a sinful, miserable one, engaged and fixed in an unremediable necessity of sinning and suffering for ever; so is it the only means upon

earth, nay in the very counsel of God, able to do us any help; all the arts and spiritual engines even in heaven besides this are unprofitable. Nay, the second covenant now being sealed, and God for ever having established the rule and method of it; I say, things thus standing, God Himself cannot be presumed to have mercy upon any one but who is thus qualified; it being the only foundation on which our heaven is built, the only ground we have to hope for any thing, as is manifest by that place, being rightly weighed,

Heb. xi. 1. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for," where the Greek phrase, *ὑπόστασις ἐλπιζομένων*, signifies the ground or foundation of every of those things which can be the object of a Christian's hope. So that where no ground-work, no building; if no faith, no hope, no possibility of heaven. If the devil could have but stolen this jewel out of the world, he had shut up heaven gates eternally, and had left it as empty of saints as it is full of glory, not capable of any flesh but what Christ's hypostatical union brought thither. And this is no more than I conceive the learned mean by *necessitas medii*, that faith is necessary as a means, i. e. there is no means besides of power, either absolutely or *ex hypothesi*, of itself or on supposition of God's covenant, to bring us to heaven. Nothing is of force besides in reason to prepare, or morally accommodate; and God hath not promised to accept in mercy of any thing else. For whereas the promises are sometimes made to repentance, sometimes to obedience, as, whosoever repenteth shall be saved, and the like; you are to know, that it is on this ground of the necessary union of these graces, that where one of them is truly and sincerely, there the rest are always in some degree, there being no example of penitence or obedience in any subject which had

Heb. xi. 6. not faith also. "For he that comes to God must believe that He is," &c. And he that heartily believes He is, and is "a rewarder of them that seek Him," will not fail to search, pursue, and follow after Him. So that, though the promises are made promiscuously to any one which hath either of these graces, yet it is upon supposal of the rest; if it be

Gal. v. 6. made of faith, it is in confidence that "faith works by love,"

Jam. ii. 22. and as St. James enforces it, "is made perfect by works." So that, in the first place, infidelity is sufficiently aggravated

in respect of the subject; it being a catholic destroyer, an intervenient that despoils him of all means, all hope, all possibility of salvation: finding him in the state of damnation, it sets him going, suffers him not to lay hold on any thing that may stay him in his precipice; and in the midst of his shipwreck, when there be planks and refuges enough about him, hath numbed his hands, deprived him of any power of taking hold of them.

In the second place, in respect of Christ and His sufferings, the objects of our faith, so faith is in a manner the soul of them, giving them life and efficacy, making things which are excellent in themselves prove so in effect to others. Thus the whole splendour and beauty of the world, the most accurate proportions and images of nature are beholding to the eye, though not for their absolute excellency, yet for both the account and use that is made of them; for if all men were blind, the proudest workmanship of nature would not be worth the valuing. Thus is a learned piece cast away upon the ignorant, and the understanding of the auditor is the best commendation of a speech or sermon. In like manner, those infinite unvaluable sufferings of Christ, if they be not believed in, are but, as Aristotle[b] saith of divine knowledge, "a most honourable thing, but of no manner of use;" if they be not apprehended, they are lost. Christ's blood if not caught up in our hearts by faith, but suffered to be poured out upon the earth, will prove no better than that of Abel, "crying for judgment from the ground;" that which is spilt Gen. iv. 10. is clamorous, and its voice is toward heaven for vengeance; only that which is gathered up, as it falls from His side, by faith will prove a medicine to heal the nations. So that infidelity makes the death of Christ no more than the death of an ordinary man, "in which there is no remedy," οὐκ ἔστιν Wisd. ii. 1. ἴασις, "there is no cure," no physic in it; or as the same word is rendered, "no pardon," no remission wrought by it, a bare Eccles. going down into the grave, that no man is better for. It xxviii. 3. doth even frustrate the sufferings of Christ, and make Him have paid a ransom to no purpose, and purchased an inheritance at an infinite rate, and no man the better for it. Again, Christ is not only contemned, but injured, not only slighted,

[b] [Metaph., A. c. 2.]

but robbed, He loses not only His price and His thanks, but His servant, which He hath bought and purchased with His blood. For redemption is not an absolute setting free, but the buying out of an usurper's hands, that he may return to his proper lord; changing him from the condition of a captive to a subject. He which is ransomed from the galleys is not presently a king, but only recovered to a free and tolerable service: nay generally, if he be redeemed, he is *eo nomine* a servant, by right and equity his creature that
Luke i. 74. redeemed him, according to the express words, "that we being delivered might serve Him." Now a servant is a possession, part of one's estate, as truly to be reckoned his as any part of his inheritance. So that every unbeliever is a thief, robs Christ not only of the honour of saving him, but of one of the members of His family, of part of His goods, His servant; nay, it is not a bare theft, but of the highest size, a sacrilege, stealing an holy instrument, a vessel out of God's temple, which He bought and delivered out of the
Luke i. 74. common calamity to "serve Him in holiness," to be put to holy, special services.

In the third place, faith may be considered in reference to God the Father, and that 1. as the author or fountain of this theological grace; 2. as the commander of this duty of believing; and either of these will aggravate the unbeliever's guilt, and add more articles to his indictment. As God is the author of faith, so the infidel resists, and abandons, and flies from all those methods, all those means, by which God ordinarily produces faith; all the power of His Scriptures, all the blessings of a Christian education, all the benefits of sacred knowledge; in sum, the prayers, the sweat, the lungs,
1 Cor. v. 20. the bowels of His ministers, in Christ's stead "beseeching you to be reconciled," spending their dearest spirits, and even praying and preaching out their souls for you, that you would be friends with God through Christ. All these, I say, the infidel takes no notice of, and by his contempt of these inferior graces, shews how he would carry himself even towards God's very Spirit, if it should come in power to convert him, he would hold out and bid defiance, and repel the omnipotent God with His omnipotent charms of mercy: he that contemns God's ordinary means, would be likely to re-

sist His extraordinary, were there not more force in the means than forwardness in the man: and thanks be to that controlling, convincing, constraining Spirit, if ever he be brought to be content to be saved. He that will not now believe in Christ when He is preached, would have gone very near, if he had lived then, to have given his consent, and joined his suffrage in crucifying Him. A man may guess of his inclination by his present practices, and if he will not now be His disciple, it was not his innocence, but his good fortune, that he did not then betray Him. It was well he was born amongst Christians, or else he might have been as sour a professed enemy of Christ as Pilate, or the Pharisees: an unbelieving Christian is, for all his livery and profession, but a Jew or heathen, and the Lord make him sensible of his condition.

Lastly, consider this duty of faith in respect of God the Father commanding it, and then you shall find it the main precept of the Bible. It were long to shew you the ground of it in the law of nature, the obscure, yet discernible mention of it in the moral law, both transcendently, in the main end of all, and distinctly, though not clearly, in the first commandment; he that hath a mind to see may find it in Pet. Baronius, *de præstantia et dignitate divinæ legis.* It were as toilsome to muster up all the commands of the Old Testament, which exactly and determinately drive at belief in Christ; as generally, in those places, where the Chaldee Paraphrase reads instead of God, God's Word, as, "fear not, Abraham, for I am thy shield," say they, "My Word is thy shield," which speaks a plain command of faith; for not to fear is to trust; not to fear on that ground, because God's word, ὁ Λόγος, "the Word," Christ, is one's shield, is nothing John i. 1.
in the world but to believe, and rely, and fasten, and depend on Christ. Many the like commands of faith in Christ will the Old Testament afford, and the New is nothing else but a perpetual inculcating of it upon us, a driving and calling, entreating and enforcing, wooing and hastening us to believe. In which respect the schools call it also necessary *necessitate præcepti,* a thing which though we should be never the better for, we are bound to perform. So that though faith were not able to save us, yet infidelity would damn us, it being amongst others a direct breach of a natural, a moral,

nay, an evangelical commandment. And so much for the danger of infidelity considered positively in relation to the subject whom it deprives of heaven; the object, Christ and His offers in the Gospel, which it frustrates; and lastly the author and commander of it, God the Father, whom it resists, disobeys, and scorns. You will perhaps more feelingly be affected to the loathing of it, if we proceed to the odious and dangerous condition of it, above all other sins and breaches in the world, which is my third part, its comparative sinfulness, "It shall be more tolerable," &c.

And this will appear, if we consider it, 1. in itself; 2. in its consequences. In itself it is fuller of guilt, in its consequences fuller of danger, than any ordinary breach of the moral law. In itself, so it is 1. the greatest aversion from God,—in which aversion the schoolmen place the *formalis ratio*, the very essence of sin—it is the perversest remotion and turning away of the soul from God, and getting as far as we can out of His sight, or ken, the forbidding of all manner of commerce or spiritual traffic, or correspondence with God,
Heb. x. 38. as may appear by that admirable place, Heb. x. 38, "The just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul
ver. 39. hath no pleasure in him;" and ver. 39, "We are not of them which draw back unto perdition, but of them that do believe to the saving of the soul." Where the phrase of drawing back opposed here to faith and believing, is in the original *ὑποστολὴ*, a cowardly, pusillanimous subducing of one's-self, a getting out of the way, a not daring to meet, or approach, or accept of Christ when He is offered them; the same with *συστολὴ* among the physicians, a contraction of the soul, a shrivelling of it up, a sudden corruption and depression of the mind, such as the sight of some hideous danger is wont
2 Macc. vi. 12. to produce, so 2 Macc. vi. 12, *συστέλλεσθαι, κ. τ. λ.*, to be discouraged, and to forsake the Jewish religion, because
Gal. ii. 12. of the calamities. So is the word used of Peter, *ὑπέστελλε καὶ ἀφώριζεν ἑαυτὸν, φοβούμενος, κ.τ.λ.*, "he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those that were of the circumcision." The infidel, I say, draws back, withdraws and sneaks out of the way, as if he were afraid of the mercies of his Saviour, as if it were death to him to be so near salvation; as if Christ coming to him with the mercies of the

gospel, were the mortalest enemy under heaven, and there were no such mischief to be done him as his conversion. This indeed is an aversion in the highest degree, when we fly and draw back from God when He comes to save us, when the sight of a Saviour makes us take our heels. Adam might well hide himself when God came to challenge him about his disobedience; the guilty conscience being afraid of revenge, may well slink out of His presence with Cain. Gen. iv. 16. But to tremble and quake at a proclamation of mercy, when God "draws with cords of a man," a powerful phrase expressed Hos. xi. 4. in the next words with "the bands of love;" when He loveth us, and calls His Son out for us, then to be "bent to backsliding," in the seventh verse, to draw back when He comes to embrace, this is a stubbornness and contraction of the soul, a crouching of it in, a συστολὴ or ὑποστολὴ, that neither nature nor reason would be guilty of: an aversion from God, which no other sin can parallel, and therefore of all other most intolerable in the first place.

2. Infidelity gives God the lie, and denies whatever God proclaims in the gospel. The reason or ground of any one's belief, the *objectum formale quo*, that, by assenting to which I come to believe, is God's veracity; the confidence that God speaks true, the relying on His word, is that which brings me to lay hold on Christ; and therefore the infidel is downright with God; he will not take His word, he will never be persuaded that these benefits of Christ's death that are offered to all men, can ever do him any good. Let God call him to accept them, he will never come; his surly, resolute carriage is in effect a contradicting of whatever God hath affirmed, a direct thwarting, a giving the lie to God and His Evangelists: and this is an aggravation not to be mentioned without reverence or horror, the most odious affront in the world; the Lord be merciful to us in this matter.

Next, this sin is a sin of the most dangerous consequences of any.

1. It produces all other sins; and that positively, by doubting of His justice, and so falling into adulteries, blasphemies, and the like, in security and hope of impunity; by distrusting of His providence and mercy, and so flying to covetousness, murmuring, tempting, subtlety, all arts and

stratagems of getting for our temporal estate, and ordinary despair in our spiritual: then privatively, depriving us of that which is the mother and soul of our obedience and good works, I mean faith, so that every thing for want of it is turned into sin, and thereby depopulating the whole man, making him nothing in the world but ruins and noisomeness, a confluence of all manner of sins, without any concomitant degree of duty or obedience.

2. It frustrates all good exhortations, and forbids all manner of superstructions which the ministers are wont to labour for in moving us to charity, and obedience, and joy, and hope, and prayer, by not having laid any foundation whereon these must be built; any of these set or planted in any infidel heart will soon wither: they must have a stock of faith whereon to be grafted, or else they are never likely to thrive. As Galba's wit was a good one, but it was unluckily placed, ill-seated, there was no good to be wrought by it. The proudest of our works or merits, the perfectest morality will stand but very weakly, unless it be founded on that foundation whose corner-stone is Christ Jesus. [Eph. ii. 20.]

3. It leaves no place in the world for remedy: he that is an idolater, a sabbath-breaker, or the like; he that is arraigned at the law, and found guilty at that tribunal, hath yet an advocate in the gospel, a higher power to whom he may appeal to mitigate his sentence: but he that hath sinned against the gospel, hath no further to go, he hath sinned against that which should have remitted all other sins; and now he is come to an unremediable estate, to a kind of hell, or the grave of sin, from whence there is no recovery. There is not a mercy to be fetched in the world but out of the gospel, and he that hath refused them is past any further treaty: "He that believeth not is condemned already;" his damnation is sealed to him, and the entail past cutting off; it is his purchase, and now wants nothing but livery and seizin; nay, it is his patrimony, *ἀπώλειαν ἐκληρονόμησεν*, he is as sure of it, as of any pennyworth of his inheritance. And the reason is implied, "If Christ be not risen, you are yet in your sins:" there is no way to get out of our sins but Christ's resurrection, and he that believeth not, Christ is not risen to him: it were all one to him if there

John iii. 18.

Ecclus. xx. 25.

1 Cor. xv. 17.

had never been a Saviour; and therefore he remains in his old thraldom; he was taken captive in Adam, and hath never since had any other means to restore him: the ransom that was offered all, he would none of, and so he sticks unredeemed, he is yet in his sins, and so for ever like to continue. And now he is come to this state, it were superfluous further to aggravate the sin against him; his case is too wretched to be upbraided him, the rest of our time shall be employed in providing a remedy for him, if it be possible, and that must be from consideration of the disease, in a word and close of application.

The sin being thus displayed to you with its consequences, O what a spirit should it raise in us! O what a resolution and expression of our manhood, to resist and banish out of us this "evil heart of unbelief!" What an hatred should it work in our bowels, what a reluctancy, what an indignation, what a revenge against the fruit of our bosom, which hath so long grown and thrived within us, only to our destruction! which is provided as it were to eat our souls, as an harbinger to prepare a place within us for the worm in hell, where it may lie and bite and gnaw at ease eternally! It is an examination that will deserve the most precious minute of our lives, the solemnest work of our souls, the carefulest muster of our faculties, to shrift and winnow, and even set our hearts upon the rack, to see whether any fruit or seed of infidelity lurk in it; and in a matter of this danger to prevent God's inquest by our own, to display every thing to ourselves, just as it shall be laid open before God in judgment, *γυμνὸν καὶ τετραχηλισμένον*, naked and discernible as the entrails of a creature cut down the back, where the very method of nature in its secrecies is betrayed to the eye. I say, to cut ourselves up, and to search into every cranny of our souls, every winding of either our understanding or affections; and observe whether any infidel thought, any infidel lust be lodged there: and when we have found this execrable thing which hath brought all our plagues on us, then must we purge, and cleanse, and lustrate the whole city for its sake: and with more ceremony than ever the heathen used, even with a superstition of daily, hourly prayers, and sacrificing ourselves to God, strive and struggle, and offer violence to remove this

Heb. iii. 12.

Heb. iv. 13.

unclean thing out of our coasts; use these unbelieving hearts of ours, as Josiah did the altars of Ahaz, "break them down, beat them to powder, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron;" that Cedron which Christ passed over when He went to suffer, even that brook which "Christ drank of by the way." And there indeed is there a remedy for infidelity, if the infidel will throw it in. If he will put it off, be it never so dyed in the contempt of Christ's blood, that very blood shall cleanse it: and therefore

2 Kings xxiii. 12.

John xviii. 1.

Ps. cx. 7.

In the next place, let us labour for faith; let not His hands be stretched out any longer upon the cross to a faithless and stubborn generation. It were a piece of ignorance that a scholar would abhor to be guilty of, not to be able to understand that inscription written by Pilate in either of three languages, "Jesus of Nazareth, King." Nay for all the Gospels and comments written on it, both by His disciples and His works, still to be non-proficients, this would prove an accusation written in marble, nay, an exprobration above a στηλιτευτικόν. In a word, Christ is still offered and the proclamation not yet outdated, His sufferings in the Scripture proposed to every one of you to lay hold on, and His ministers sent as "ambassadors beseeching you to be reconciled," and more than that, in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, His body and blood set before our eyes to be felt and gazed on, and then even a Didymus would believe; nay, to be divided amongst us, and put in our mouths, and then who would be so sluggish as to refuse to feed on Him in his heart?

[Is. lxv. 2.]

John xix. 19.

2 Cor. v. 20.

For your election from the beginning to this gift of faith, let that never raise any doubt or scruple in you, and foreslow that coming to Him; this is a jealousy that hath undone many, in a resolvedness that if they are not elected, all their faith shall prove unprofitable. Christ that bids thee repent, believe, and come unto Him, is not so frivolous to command impossibilities, nor so cruel to mock our impotence. Thou mayest believe, because He bids: believe, and then thou mayest be sure thou wert predestinated to believe; and then all the decrees in the world cannot deny thee Christ, if thou art thus resolved to have Him. If thou wilt not believe, thou hast reprobated thyself, and who is to be accused that thou art not

saved? But if thou wilt come in, there is sure entertainment for thee. He that begins in God's counsels, and never thinks fit to go about any evangelical duty, till he can see his name writ in the Book of life, must not begin to believe till he be in heaven; for there only is that to be read *radio recto*. The surer course is to follow the Scripture; to hope comfortably every one of ourselves, to use the means, apprehend the mercies, and then to be confident of the benefits of Christ's suffering: and this is the way to make our election sure, to read it in ourselves *radio reflexo*, by knowing that we believe, to resolve that we are elected; thereby "we know that we are past from death to life, if we love the brethren." And so is it also of faith; for these are inseparable graces. So Psalm xxv. 14; Prov. iii. 32, God's secret and His covenant, being taken for His decree, is said to be "with them that fear Him," and to be "shewed to them," i. e. their very fearing of God is an evidence to them that they are His elect, with whom He hath entered covenant. Our faith is the best argument, or κριτήριον, by which to make a judgment to God's decree concerning us. I say, if we will believe God hath elected us; it is impossible any true faith should be refused upon pretence the person was predestined to destruction; and if it were possible, yet would I hope that God's decrees—were they as absolute as some would have them—should sooner be softened into mercy, than that mercy purchased by His Son, should ever fail to any that believes. The bargain was made, the covenant struck, and the immutability of the Persian laws are nothing to it, that "whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Wherefore, in brief, let us attend the means, and let what will or can come of the end; Christ is offered to every soul here present to be a Jesus, only do thou accept of Him, and thou art past from death to life; there is no more required of thee, but only to take Him; if thou art truly possessor of Him, He will justify, He will humble, He will sanctify thee; He will work all reformation in thee: and in time seal thee up to the day of redemption: only be careful that thou mistakest not His person; thou must receive Him, as well as His promises; thou must take Him as a Lord and King, as well as a Saviour, and be content to be a subject, as well as a saint. He is

1 John iii. 14.

Ps. xxv. 14; Prov. iii. 32.

John iii. 15.

now proclaimed in your ears, and you must not foreslow the audience, or procrastinate; "To-day if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." He holds Himself out on purpose to you, and by the minister woos you to embrace Him: and then it nearly concerns you not to provoke so true, so hearty, nay, even so passionate a friend: if He be not kissed He will be angry. Lastly, if in this business of believing so vulgarly exposed, there yet appear some difficulties in the practice, to be overcome before it prove a possible duty: if self-denial be incompatible with flesh and blood; if delights and worldly contentments, if an hardened heart in sin, and a world of high imaginations, refuse to submit or humble themselves to the poverty of Christ; if we cannot empty our hands to lay hold, or unbottom ourselves to lean wholly on Christ, then must we fly, and pray to that Spirit of power, to subdue, and conquer, and lead us captive to itself, to instruct us in the baseness, the nothingness, nay, the dismal, hideous wretchedness of our own estate, that so being spiritually shaken and terrified out of our carnal pride and security, we may come trembling and quaking to that throne of grace, and with the hands of faith, though feeble ones, with the eye of faith, though dimly, with a hearty sincere resigning up of ourselves, we may see and apprehend, and fasten, and be united to our Saviour: that we may live in Christ, and Christ in us, and having begun in the life of grace here, we may hope and attain to be accomplished with that of glory hereafter.

[Ps. xcv. 8.]

Ps. ii. 12.

"Now to Him which hath elected us," &c.

SERMON XXIV.

Acts xvii. 30.

And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent.

The words in our English translation carry somewhat in the sound, which doth not fully reach the importance of the original, and therefore it must be the task of our preface not to connect the text, but clear it; not to shew its dependence on the precedent words, but to restore it to the integrity of itself, that so we may perfectly conceive the words, before we venture to discuss them; that we may *ὑποτυπῶσαι πρῶτον, ὕστερον ἀναγράφειν*, as Aristotle[a] phrases it, "first represent them to you in the bulk, then describe them particularly in their several lineaments." Our English setting of the words seems to make two propositions, and in them a direct opposition betwixt the condition of the ancient and present Gentiles; that God had winked at, i. e. either approved, or pitied, or pardoned the ignorance of the former heathens, but now was resolved to execute justice on all that did continue in that was heretofore pardonable in them, on every one every where that did not repent. Now the original runs thus, *τοὺς μὲν οὖν χρόνους τῆν ἀγνοίας ὑπεριδὼν ὁ Θεὸς, τὰ νῦν παραγγέλλει, κ.τ.λ.*, that is, in a literal construction, "God therefore passing over the times of ignorance, as if He saw them not, doth now command all men every where to repent." Which you may conceive thus, by this kind of vulgar *ἀνάβασις*, or sensible proceeding in God. God always is, essentially and perfectly, every one of His attributes, wisdom, justice, mercy, &c., but yet is said at one time to be peculi-

[a] [Eth. Nicom., i. c. 7.]

arly one attribute, at another time another, i. e. to be at one time actually just, at another time actually merciful, according to His determination to the object. As when God fixes His eyes upon a rebellious people, whose sins are ripe for His justice, He then executes His vengeance on them as on Sodom: when He fixes His eyes upon a penitent, believing people, He then doth exercise His mercy, as on Nineveh. Now when God looks upon any part of the lapsed world on which He intends to have mercy, He suffers not His eye to be fixed or terminated on the medium betwixt His eye and them, on the sins of all their ancestors from the beginning of the world till that day; but having another account to call them to, doth for the present, *ὑπεριδεῖν*, *ὑπερβλέπειν*, *ὑπεροράν*, "look over all them," as if they were not in His way, and imputing not the sins of the fathers to the children, fixeth on the children, makes His covenant of mercy with them, and commandeth them the condition of this covenant, whereby they shall obtain mercy, that is, "every one every where to repent." So that in the first place, *ὑπεριδὼν παραγγέλλει* must not be rendered by way of opposition, "He winked then, but now commands," as if their former ignorance were justifiable, and an account of knowledge should only be exacted from us. And in the second place, *ὑπεριδὼν*, a word read but this once in all the New Testament, must be rendered, not "winking at," but "looking over," or not insisting upon; as when we fix our eyes upon a hill we suffer them not to dwell on the valley on this side of it, because we look earnestly on the hill. Now if this be not the common Attical acception of it, yet it will seem agreeable to the penning of the New Testament, in which whosoever will observe, may find words and phrases which perhaps the Attic purity, perhaps grammar, will not approve of. And yet I doubt not but classic authorities may be brought where *ὑπεριδεῖν* shall signify, not a winking, or not taking notice of, but a looking further, a not resting in this, but a driving higher, for so it is rendered by Stephanus, *ad ulteriora oculos convertere*, and then the phrase shall be as proper as the sense, the Greek as authentical as the doctrine, that God looking over and not insisting upon the ignorance of the former heathen, at Christ's coming entered a covenant with their successors, the condi-

tion of which was, "that every man every where should repent."

And this is made good by the Greek Scholia of the New Testament, *οὐ τοῦτό φησιν*[b], *κ.τ.λ.*, "that is spoken, not that the former heathen should be unpunished, but that their successors to whom St. Paul preached, if they would repent, should not be called to an account of their ignorance," should not fare the worse for the ignorance of their fathers; and at this drives also Chrysostom[c], out of whom the scholiasts may seem to have borrowed it, their whole *ἐξήγησις* being but *ἔκλεκτα*, gleanings out of the fathers before them. I might further prove the necessity of this interpretation if it were required of me: and thus far I have stayed you to prove it, because our English is somewhat imperfect in the expression of it. *Δύο κύβοι οὐκ εἰσὶ κύβος*, saith Aristotle, "Two cubes are not a cube," but another figure very different from it: and indeed our English translations by making two propositions of this verse, have varied the native single proposition in that regard, and made it unlike itself, which briefly—if I can inform myself aright—should run thus, by way of one simple enunciation; "God therefore not insisting on, but looking over those times of ignorance, doth now command all men every where to repent;" of which those three lines in Leo's[d] fourth sermon *de Passione Domini* are a just paraphrase, *Nos sub veteris ignorantiæ profunda nocte pereuntes, in patriarcharum societatem, et fortem electi gregis adoptavit.* So then the words being represented to you in this scheme or single diagram, are the covenant of mercy made with the progeny of ignorant heathens, upon condition of repentance, in which you may observe two grand parallel lines, 1, the ignorance of the heathen, such as in the justice of God might have provoked Him to have pretermitted the whole world of succeeding Gentiles: 2, the mercy of God, not imputing their ignorance to our charge, whosoever every where to the end of the world shall repent. And first of the first, the ignorance of the heathen in these words, *τοὺς μὲν οὖν χρόνους*, "the times," &c.

[b] [Œcumenius Ennarrat in loc. et Op., tom. i. p. 139. Paris. 1631.]

[c] [In Acta Apostol. Hom. xxxviii. Op., tom. ix. p. 291. C, D.]

[d] [S. Leo. Serm. lv. de Passione Domini, iv. cap. 5. Op., tom. i. p. 210.]

If for the clearing of this bill we should begin our inquest at Japhet the father of the Gentiles, examine them all by their gradations, we should in the general find the evidence to run thus; 1. that they were absolutely ignorant, as ignorance is opposed to learning; 2. ignorant in the affairs of God, as ignorance is opposed to piety or spiritual wisdom; 3. ignorant supinely, perversely, and maliciously, as it is opposed to a simple or more excusable ignorance.

Their absolute ignorance or *ἀπαιδευσία*, their want of learning is at large proved by St. Austin xviii. *de Civ. Dei*, Eusebius *Præpar.* x., Clemens in his *Protrep.* and others, some of whose writings to this purpose—because it is easier for my auditors to believe me in gross, than to be troubled with the retail—is this, that the beginnings of learning in all kinds was among the Jews, whilst the whole heathen world besides was barbarously ignorant; that Moses appointed masters among the tribes, *γραμμάτων εἰσαγωγεῖς*, which initiated the youth of Israel in all kind of secular learning; or if you will believe Patricius[e] and his proofs, that Shem erected, and afterwards Heber enlarged, *scholas doctrinarum*, schools or seminaries of learning, where learning was professed and taught; that Abraham, as Eusebius cites Nic. Damascenus[f] for it, was excellent in the mathematics, and dispersed and communicated his knowledge in Chaldea, from whence the Egyptians, and from them the Grecians came to them; that Enoch was probably judged by Polyhistor[g] to be that Atlas to whom the heathen imputed the beginning of astronomy; that in the sum, all learning was primitive among the Hebrews, and from them, by stealth and filching, some seeds of it sown in Phœnicia, Egypt, and at last in Greece. For they make it plain by computation, that Moses,—who yet was long after Enoch, and Shem, and Heber, and Abraham, all *in confesso* great scholars,—that Moses, I say, was fifteen hundred years ancienter than the Greek philosophers, that all the learning that is found and bragged of amongst the Grecians—whose ignorance my text chiefly deals with, St. Paul's discourse here being addressed to the Athenians—was but a babe of a

[e] Zoroaster, p. 4.

[f] [Nicol. Damascenus, ap. Euseb., Præpar. Evang., lib. ix. p. 417 d.]

[g] [Ap. Euseb., ibid., lib. ix. p. 419 d.]

day old in respect of the true antiquity of learning: that all their philosophy was but scraps, *ἀποσπασμάτια*, which fell from the Jews' tables; that in their stealth they were very imprudent, gleaned only that which was not worth carrying away, *οὐδὲν ἢ πρὸς Θεὸν, ἢ πρὸς σώφρονα βίον, κ.τ.λ.*, stuffed their sacks, which they carried into Egypt to buy food, only with some unprofitable chaff, with empty speculations that would puff up, not fill or nourish the soul, but brought no valuable real commodity away with them, whereby they might improve their knowledge, or reform their manners; upon which two grounds, 1. the vanity and unprofitableness of their learning; 2. the novelty of it in respect of the Hebrews from whom they stole it afar off; they are not thought worthy of the title of scholars; and for all the noise of their philosophy, are yet judged absolutely ignorant, as ignorance is opposed to learning.

In the second place, for their ignorance in the affairs of God, their own author's examination will bring in a sufficient evidence. If you will sort out the chiefest names of learned men amongst them, you will there find the veriest dunces in this learning. The deipnosophists, the only wits of the time, are yet described by Athenæus to employ their study only how to get good cheer a free cost, *ἀοιδοὶ αἰὲν ἄκαπνα θύομεν*[h], they fed deliciously, and yet were at no charge for the provision; and amongst them you shall scarcely find any knowledge or worship of even their heathen gods, but only in drinking, where their luxury had this excuse or pretence of religion, that it was *δεῖγμα τῆς δυνάμεως τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀγαθοῦ*, "an experiment of the power of that good God" which had provided such a creature as wine for them to abuse; which perhaps a drunken Romish casuist stole from them, where he allows of drinking *supra modum, ad glorificandum Deum, &c.*, "to the glorifying of God," creator of so excellent a creature, which hath the effect in it of turning men into beasts. So that it seems by the story of them in brief, that the deipnosophists, men of the finest, politest conceits, as Ulpianus Tyrius, Calliphanes, and the like in Athenæus, in the multitude of the Grecian gods had but one deity, and that was their belly, which they worshipped *religioso luxu,*

[h] [Lib. i. c. 14. p. 8 E. ed. Casaub.]

not singing, but eating and drinking praises to his name; to this add the Sophistæ, Protagoras, Hippias, and the like great boasters of learning in Socrates's time, and much followed by the youth, till he persuaded them from admiring such unprofitable professors, and these are observed by Plutarch, to be mere hucksters of vainglory; getting great store of money and applause from their auditors, *ἀργύριον καὶ οἴημα*, "silver and popularity," but had no manner of profitable learning to bestow upon them, as Plutarch dooms them in his Platonic Questions[i], and Socrates in his Dialogues in confutation of them; and certainly by their very profession it is plain that these men had no God to know or worship, except their gain. But not to insist on these or other their professors of more curious, trim, polite learning, as their philosophers, grammarians, and rhetoricians, it will be more seasonable to our text to examine St. Paul's auditors here, the great speculators among them: 1. the deepest philosophers, and there where you expect the greatest knowledge you shall find the most barbarous ignorance; in the midst of the *πολυθεότης* of the Grecians, the philosophers (saith Clement[k], and it is plain by their writings,) finding out and acknowledging in private this multitude of gods to be a prodigious vanity, and infinitely below the gravity and wisdom of their profession, took themselves off from this unreasonable worship, and almost each of them in private worshipped some one God. And here you would think that they jumped with the Jews of that time, in the acknowledging an unity: but if you mark them you shall find that they did not reform the popular atheism, but only varied it into a more rational way. Thales would not acknowledge Neptune, as the poets and people did, but yet he deifies the water as Clement[l] observes: another scorned to be so senseless as to worship wood or stone, and yet he deifies the earth, the parent of them both, and as senseless as them both; and does at once *calcare terram et colere*, "tread on the earth with his feet, and adore it with his heart." So Socrates,—who by bringing in morality was a great refiner and pruner of barren philosophy,—

[i] [Platonicæ Quæstiones, Quæst. i. 5. sq.] Op., tom. x. p. 160. Reiske.]

[k] [Clemens Alex. Protrept., cap.]

[l] [Id., Ibid.]

absolutely denying the Grecian gods, and thence called *ἄθεος*, is yet brought in by Aristophanes[m], worshipping the clouds, *ὦ δέσποτ' ἀὴρ, κ.τ.λ.*, and by a more friendly historian described addressing a sacrifice to Æsculapius[n], being at the point of death. So that in brief, the philosophers, disliking the vulgar superstition, went to school, saith Clement[o], to the Persian magi, and of them learnt a more scholastic atheism. The worship of those venerable elements, which because they were the beginnings out of which natural bodies were composed, were by these naturalists admired and worshipped instead of the God of nature. From which a man may plainly judge of the beginning and ground of the general atheism of philosophers, that it was a superficial knowledge of philosophy, the sight of second causes and dwelling on them, and being unable to go any higher. For men by nature being inclined to acknowledge a Deity, take that to be their God which is the highest in their sphere of knowledge, or the *supremum cognitum* which they have attained to; whereas if they had been studious, or able by the dependence of causes to have proceeded beyond these elements, they might possibly, nay, certainly would have been reduced to piety and religion, which is *εὐσέβεια, θεοσέβεια*, "the knowledge and worship of God;" but there were many hindrances which kept them grovelling on the earth, not able to ascend this ladder. 1. They wanted that *οἰκεία εὐεξία τῆς ψυχῆς*, which Aphrodisiensis[p] on the Topics speaks of, that kindly, familiar good temper, or disposition of the soul, *καθ' ἣν εὑρετική τε ἀληθοῦς καὶ κριτική ἐστι*, "by which the mind is able to find out and judge of truth;" they wanted either that natural harmony, or spiritual concord of the powers of the soul, by which it is able to reach those things which now in corrupt nature are only spiritually discerned. For it is Clement's[q] Christian judgment of them, that the Gentiles being but bastards, not true-born sons of God, but aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, were therefore not able to look up toward the light, (as it is observed of the bastard-brood of eagles,) or [Eph. ii. 12.]

[m] Nub. 264.

[n] [Cf. Plato, Phæd. ad fin.]

[o] [Clemens Alex. Protrept., § 65. p. 57. ed. Potter.]

[p] [Alex. Aphrodis. in Aristot. Topica, f. 17.]

[q] [Clemens Alex. Protrept., ch. x. § 92. p. 75. ed. Pott.]

consequently to discern that inaccessible light, till they were received into the covenant, and made *τέκνα φῶτος γνήσια*, true proper "children of light." A second hindrance was the grossness and earthiness of their fancy, which was not able to conceive God to be any thing but a corporeous substance, as Philoponus observes in his Scholia on the books *de anima*[r], *ὅταν θέλωμεν, κ.τ.λ.* "When we have a mind to betake ourselves to divine speculation," our fancy comes in, *καὶ θόρυβον κινεῖ*, "raises such a tempest" in us, so many earthly meteors to clog and over-cloud the soul, that it cannot but conceive the Deity under some bodily shape, and this disorder of the fancy doth perpetually attend the soul, even in the fairest weather, in its greatest calm and serenity of affections, *ὅταν σχολὴν, κ.τ.λ.*, saith Plato, even when the soul is free from its ordinary distractions, and hath provided itself most accurately for contemplation. Philoponus in this place finding this inconvenience, fetches a remedy out of Plotinus for this rarifying and purifying of the fancy, and it is the study of the mathematics, *ἀγέσθωσαν νέοι, κ.τ.λ.*, "Let young men be brought up in the study of the mathematics," to some acquaintance with an incorporeous nature; but how unprofitable a remedy this study of the mathematics was, to the purpose of preparing the soul to a right conceit of God, I doubt not but he himself afterwards found, when he turned Christian, and saw how far their mathematical and metaphysical abstractions fell below those purest theological conceits, of which only grace could make him capable. So that in brief their understanding being fed by their fancies, and both together fattened with corporeous phantasms, as they increased in natural knowledge, grew more hardened in spiritual ignorance, and as Clement[s] saith of them, were like birds crammed in a coop; fed in darkness and nourished for death: their gross conceits groping on in obscurity, and furnishing them only with such opinions of God, as should increase both their ignorance and damnation. That I be not too large and confused in this discourse, let us pitch upon Aristotle, one of the latest of the ancient philosophers, not above three hundred and forty years before Christ,

[r] [Philoponus, Comment. in Aristot. De Anima, ff. 1, 2. ed. Aldus.]

[s] [Clemens Alex. Protrept., ch. x. § 113. p. 87. (ad fin.) Potter.]

who therefore seeing the vanities, and making use of the helps of all the Grecian learning, may probably be judged to have as much knowledge of God as any heathen; and indeed the Cologne divines had such an opinion of his skill and expressions that way, that in their tract of Aristotle's Salvation, they define him to be Christ's *præcursor in naturalibus*, as John Baptist was *in gratuitis*. But in brief, if we examine him, we shall find him much otherwise, as stupid in the affairs of 1. God, 2. the soul, 3. happiness, as any of his fellow Gentiles. If the book περὶ κόσμου were his own legitimate work, a man might guess that he saw something, though he denied the particular providence of the Deity, and that he acknowledged His omnipotence, though he would not be so bold with Him as to let Him be busied in the producing of every particular sublunary effect. The man might seem somewhat tender of God, as if being but newly come acquainted with Him he were afraid to put Him to too much pains, as judging it μηδὲ καλὸν, κ.τ.λ., "neither comely nor befitting the majesty of a God to interest Himself in every action upon earth [t]." It might seem a reverence and awe which made him provide the same course for God, which he saw used in the courts of Susa and Ecbatana, where the king, saith he, lived invisible in his palace, and yet by his officers, as through prospectives and otacoustics, saw and heard all that was done in his dominions. But this book being not of the same complexion with the rest of his philosophy, is shrewdly guessed to be a spurious issue of later times, entitled to Aristotle and translated by Apuleius, but not owned by its brethren, the rest of his books of philosophy; for even in the Metaphysics [u]—where he is at his wisest—he censures Xenophanes for a clown for looking up to heaven, and affirming that there was one God there, the cause of all things, and rather than he will credit him he commends Parmenides for a subtle fellow, who said nothing at all, or I am sure to no purpose.

Concerning his knowledge of the soul, it is Philoponus' [x] observation of him, that he persuades only the more understanding, laborious, judicious sort to be his auditors in that

[t] [Pseud-Aristot. De Mundo, c. 6.]
[u] [Aristot. Metaph. A. c. 5.]
[x] [Cf. Com. in Aristot. de Anima, lib. i. cap. 1. ad init. Cf. also Schol. on the Categories, p. 36. b. ed. Berlin.]

subject, *τοὺς δὲ ῥᾳθυμοτέρους ἀποτρέπει, κ.τ.λ.*, but dehorts men of meaner vulgar parts, less intent to their study, from meddling at all with this science about the soul, for he plainly tells them in his first *de anima*, it is too hard for any ordinary capacity, and yet in the first of the Metaphysics[y] he defines the wise man to be one who besides his own accurate knowledge of hard things, as the causes of the soul, &c., is also able to teach any body else, who hath such an habit of knowledge, and such a command over it, that he can make any auditor understand the abstrusest mystery in it. So then out of his own words he is convinced to have had no skill, no wisdom in the business of the soul, because he could not explain nor communicate this knowledge to any but choice auditors. The truth is, these were but shifts of pride, and ambitious pretences to cloak a palpable ignorance, under the habit of mysterious, deep, speculation: when, alas, poor man! all that which he knew, or wrote of the soul, was scarce worth learning, only enough to confute his fellow ignorant philosophers, to puzzle others, to puff himself; but to profit, instruct, or edify none.

In the third place, concerning happiness, he plainly bewrays himself to be a coward, not daring to meddle with divinity. For[z] being probably given to understand, or rather indeed plainly convinced, that if any thing in the world were, then happiness must likely be *θεόσδοτος*, "the gift of God" bestowed on men, yet he there staggers at it, speaks sceptically, and not so magisterially as he is wont, dares not be so bold as to define it: and at last does not profess his ignorance, but takes a more honourable course, and puts it off to some other place to be discussed. Where Andronicus Rhodius' Greek paraphrase tells us he meant his tract *περὶ προνοίας*, "about Providence:" but in all Laertius' catalogue of the multitude of his writings we find no such title, and I much suspect by his other carriages, that the man was not so valiant as to deal with any so unwieldy a subject as the providence would have proved. Sure I am he might, if he had had a mind to it, have quitted himself of his engagements, and seasonably enough have defined the fountain of happiness

[y] [Aristot. Metaph. A. c. 2.]

[z] [Id., Eth. Nicom., lib. i. c. 10.]

there, in Ethics, but in c. 11 [a] it appears that it was no pretermission, but ignorance; not a care of deferring it to a fitter place, but a necessary silence where he was not able to speak. For there mentioning happiness and miserableness after death,—where he might have shewed his skill if he had any,—he plainly betrays himself an arrant naturalist in defining all the felicity and misery "to be the good or ill proof of their friends and children left behind them," which are to them being dead, happiness or miseries, ἄλλ' οὐκ αἰσθανομένοις, "of which they are not any way sensible." By what hath been spoken it is plain that the heathen never looked after God of their own accord, but as they were driven upon Him by the necessity of their study, which from the second causes necessarily lead them in a chain to some view of the first mover, and then some of them, either frighted with the light, or despairing of their own abilities, were terrified and discouraged from any further search; some few others sought after Him, but, as Aristotle saith the geometer doth after a right line [b], only, ὡς θεατὴς ταληθοῦς, "as a contemplator of truth," but not as the knowledge of it is any way useful or conducible to the ordering or bettering of their lives; they had an itching desire to know the Deity, but neither to apply it as a rule to their actions, nor to order their actions to His glory. For generally whensoever any action drove them on any subject which intrenched on divinity, you shall find them more flat than ordinary, not handling it according to any manner of accuracy, or sharpness, but only ἐφ' ὅσον οἰκεῖον τῇ μεθόδῳ, "only as much use or as little as their study in the search of things constrained them to," and then for the most part they fly off abruptly, as if they were glad to be quit of so cumbersome a subject. Whence Aristotle observes [c], that the whole tract *de causis* was obscurely and inartificially handled by the ancients, and if sometimes they spake to the purpose, it was as unskilful, unexercised fencers τύπτουσι καλὰς πληγὰς, they lay on, and sometimes strike a lucky blow or two, but more by chance than skill, sometimes letting fall from their pens those truths which never entered their understandings, as Theophilus *ad Autolycum* [d] observes of Homer and

[a] [Ibid., lib. i. c. 11.]
[b] [Ibid., lib. i. c. 7.]
[c] [Id., Metaph. A. c. 4.]
[d] [ἤτοι γὰρ οἱ ποιηταὶ, Ὅμηρος δὴ καὶ

Hesiod, that being inspired by their muses, i. e. the devil, spake according to that spirit lies and fables, and exact atheism, and yet sometimes would stumble upon a truth of divinity, as men possessed with devils did sometimes confess Christ, and the evil spirits being adjured by His name, came out and confessed themselves to be devils. Thus it is plain out of the philosophers and heathen discourses, 1. of God, 2. the soul, 3. happiness, that they were also ignorant, as ignorance is opposed to piety or spiritual wisdom, which was to be proved by way of premise in the second place.

Now in the third place, for the guilt of their ignorance, that it was a perverse, gross, malicious, and inexcusable ignorance, you shall briefly judge. Aristotle[e] being elevated above ordinary in his discourse about wisdom, confesses the knowledge of God to be the best knowledge and most honourable of all, but of no manner of use or necessity; *ἀναγκαιότεραι, κ.τ.λ.*, "no knowledge is better than this, yet none more unnecessary," as if the evidence of truth made him confess the nobility of this wisdom, but his own supine, stupid, perverse resolutions made him contemn it as unnecessary. But that I may not charge the accusation too hard upon Aristotle above others, and take as much pains to damn him as the Cologne divines did to save him, we will deal more at large, as Aristotle prescribes his wise men[f], and rip up to you the inexcusableness of the heathen ignorance in general: 1. by the authority of Clemens[g], who is guessed to be one of their kindest patrons in his *προτρεπτικὸς*, where having cited many testimonies out of them, concerning the unity, he concludes thus, *εἰ γὰρ, κ.τ.λ.*, "Seeing that the heathen had some sparks of the divine truth," some gleanings out of the written word, and yet make so little use of it as they do, they do, saith he, "shew the power of God's word to have been revealed to them, and accuse their own weakness that they did not improve it to the end for which it was sent;" that they increased it not into a saving knowledge; where (by the way) the word weakness is used by Clement by way of softening, or mercy, as here the Apostle useth ignorance, when he might have said impiety.

'Ησίοδος, ὥς φασιν, ὑπὸ μουσῶν ἐμπνευσθέντες, φαντασίᾳ καὶ πλάνῃ ἐλάλησαν, καὶ οὐ καθαρῷ πνεύματι, ἀλλὰ πλάνῳ.—Theophilus ii. 8. [ad calc. S. Justini, p. 354. C. Paris. 1742.]

[e] [Aristot. Metaph. A. c. 2.]

[f] [Ibid.]

[g] [Clemens Alex. Protrept., c. vii. § 74. p. 64.]

For sure if the accusation run thus, that the word of God was revealed to them, and yet they made no use of it, as it doth here in Clemens, the sentence then upon this must needs conclude them, not only *ἀσθενεῖς*, "weak," but perverse contemners of the light of Scripture. Again, the philosophers themselves confess that ignorance is the nurse, nay, mother of all impiety: *πάντα ὅσα πράττουσιν*[h], *κ.τ.λ.*, "whatsoever an ignorant man or fool doth, is unholy and wicked necessarily;" ignorance being *μανίας εἶδος*, "a species of madness," and no madman being capable of any sober action; so that if their ignorance were in the midst of means of knowledge, then must it be perverse; if it had an impure influence upon all their actions, then was it malicious and full of guilt. 2. Their chief ground that sustained and continued their ignorance, proves it to be not blind but affected, which ground you shall find by the heathen objection in Clemens[i], to be a resolution not to change the religion of their fathers. It is an unreasonable thing, say the heathens, which they will never be brought to, to change the customs bequeathed to them by their ancestors. From whence the father solidly concludes, that there was not any means in nature which could make the Christian religion contemned and hated, but only this pestilent custom, of never altering any customs or laws, though never so unreasonable; *οὐ γὰρ ἐμισήθη, κ.τ.λ.*, "it is not possible that ever any nation should hate and fly from this greatest blessing that ever was bestowed upon mankind," to wit, the knowledge and worship of God, unless being carried on by custom they resolved to go the old way to hell, rather than to venture on a new path to heaven. Hence it is that Athenagoras[k] in his Treaty with Commodus for the Christians, wonders much that among so many laws made yearly in Rome, there was not one enacted *μὴ στέργειν τὰ πάτρια κἂν γέλοια ᾖ*, "that men should forsake the customs of their fathers, which were any way absurd." From whence he falls straight to their absurd deities[l], as if it being made lawful to relinquish ridiculous customs, there would be no plea left for their ridiculous gods. So Eusebius[m],

[h] [Clemens Alex. Protrept., c. xii. § 122. p. 94. Pott.]

[i] [Ibid., c. x. ad init., p. 73. ad fin. Tertull. Apol.]

[k] [Athenag. Leg. pro Christianis, ad init., § 1.]

[l] [Ibid., § 1.]

[m] [Eusebius Præp. Evang., lib. ii. p. 74. C.]

Præp., lib. ii., makes the cause of the continuance of superstition to be, that no man dared to move those things which ancient custom of the country had authorized; and so also in his fourth book [n], where to bring in Christianity was accounted *κινεῖν τὰ ἀκίνητα*, "to change things that were fixed," *καὶ πολυπραγμονεῖν, κ.τ.λ.*, "and to be pragmatical," friends of innovation; and so it is plain they esteemed St. Paul, and hated him in that name, as an innovator, because he preached unto them "Jesus and the resurrection," Acts xvii. 18. So Acts xvi. 21, St. Paul is said to teach "customs which were not lawful for them to receive nor observe, being Romans," because, saith Casaubon out of Dio, it was not lawful for the Romans to innovate any thing in religion, for saith Dio[o], "this bringing in of new gods will bring in new laws with it." So that if—as hath been proved—their not acknowledging of the true God was grounded upon a perverse resolution not to change any custom of their fathers, either in opinion or practice, though never so absurd, then was the ignorance—or as St. Paul might have called it, the idolatry—of those times, impious, affected; not a natural blindness, but a pertinacious winking; not a simple deafness, but a resolved stubbornness not to hear the voice of the charmer; which we might further prove by shewing you, thirdly, how their learning or *πολυμαθία*, which might be proved an excellent preparative to religion, their philosophy, which was to them as the law to the Jews, by their using of it to a perverse end, grew ordinarily very pernicious to them. 4. How that those which knew most, and were at the top of profane knowledge, did then fall most desperately headlong into atheism; as Hippocrates observes, that *ἀθλητικὴ ἕξις*, and St. Basil [p], that *ἡ ἐπ' ἄκρον εὐεξία*, "the most perfect constitution of body," so of the soul, is most dangerous, if not sustained with good care and wisdom. 5. How they always forged lies to scandal the people of God, as Manetho the famous Egyptian historian saith, that Moses and the Jews were banished out of Egypt, *διὰ λέπραν*, "because of an infectious leprosy" that overspread the Jews, as Theophilus [q] cites it, and Justin out of

Acts xvii. 18.

Acts xvi. 21.

[n] [Ibid., lib. iv. p. 130. C.]

[o] [Cf. supr., p. 380.]

[p] [S. Basil. Cf. e. g. In Hexameron, hom. ix. Op., tom. i. p. 83. D.]

[q] Theophilus ad Autolyc., lib. iii. § 21. [p. 392. E, sq. ad calc. S. Just.]

Trogus[r], and also Tacitus; and the primitive Christians were branded and abomined by them for three special faults which they were little likely to be guilty of: 1. Atheism, 2. Eating their children, 3. Incestuous, common using of women, as we find them set down and confuted by Athenagoras in his Treaty or Apology[s], and Theophilus[t], *ad Autol.* &c. 6. By their own confession, as of Plato to his friend, when he wrote in earnest, and secretly acknowledging the unity which he openly denied against his conscience and the light of reason in him; and Orpheus the inventor of the πολυθεότης, professing and worshipping three hundred and sixty-five gods all his life-time, at his death left in his will ἕνα εἶναι θεὸν[u], that, however he had persuaded them all the while, there was indeed but one God. And lastly, how these two affections in them, admiration and gratitude; admiration of men of extraordinary worth, and gratitude for more than ordinary benefactions done either to particular men or nations, were the chief promoters of idolatry; making the heathens worship them as gods, whom they were acquainted with, and knew to be but men, as might be proved variously and at large. If I could insist upon any or each of these, it would be most evident, what I hope now at last is proved enough, that the ignorance of those times was not simple, blind ignorance, but malign, perverse, sacrilegious, affected, stubborn, wilful[x], I had almost said, knowing ignorance in them; which being the thing we first promised to demonstrate, we must next make up the proposition which is yet imperfect, to wit, that ignorance in these heathen, in God's justice, might have provoked Him to have pretermitted the whole world of succeeding Gentiles, which I must dispatch only in a word, because I would fain to descend to application, which I intended to be the main, but the improvident expense of my time hath now left only to be the close of my discourse.

The ignorance of those times being of this composition, both

[r] [Justin. xxxvi. 2. Tacit. Hist. v. 3.]

[s] [Athenag. Leg. pro Christianis, § 3.]

[t] [Theophilus ad Autolyc, lib. iii. §§ 4, 5. p. 382. E, sq.]

[u] [ἡ Ὀρφέα οἱ τριακόσιοι ἑξήκοντα πέντε θεοὶ, οὓς αὐτὸς ἐπὶ τέλει τοῦ βίου ἀθετεῖ, εὐ ταῖς διαθήκαις αὐτοῦ λέγων ἕνα εἶναι θεὸν.—Ibid., lib. iii. § 2. p. 381 C.]

[x] [S. Chrysost. in Matt. Hom. i. § 5. Op., tom. vii. p. 10 sq.]

in respect of the superstition of their worship, which was perverse, as hath been proved, and the profaneness of their lives, being abominable even to nature—as might farther be shewed —is now no longer to be called ignorance, but profaneness, and a profaneness so epidemical over all the Gentiles, so inbred and naturalized among them, that it was even become their property, radicated in their mythical times, and by continual succession derived down to them by their generations. So that if either a natural man with the eye of reason, or a spiritual man by observation of God's other acts of justice, should look upon the Gentiles in that state which they were in at Christ's coming, all of them damnable superstitious, or rather idolatrous in their worship; all of them damnable profane in their lives; and which was worse, all of them peremptorily resolved, and by a law of homage to the customs of their fathers necessarily engaged to continue in the road of damnation; he would certainly give the whole succession of them over as desperate people, infinitely beyond hopes or probability of salvation. And this may appear by St. Peter
Acts x. in the tenth of the Acts, where this very thing, that the Gentiles should be called, was so incredible a mystery, that he was fain to be cast into a trance, and to receive a vision to interpret it to his belief: and a first or a second command
ver. 16. could not persuade him "to arise, kill, and eat," that is, to preach to Gentiles; he was still objecting the τὸ κοινὸν καὶ ἀκάθαρτον, "the profaneness and uncleanness of them." And
ver. 15. at last, when by the assurance of the Spirit, and the heathen Cornelius's discourse with him, he was plainly convinced, what otherwise he never dreamt possible, that God had a design of mercy on the Gentiles, he breaks out into a phrase
ver. 34. both of acknowledgment and admiration, "Of a truth I perceive," &c.; and that you may not judge it was one single
ver. 45. doctor's opinion, it is added, "And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." Nay, in the third to the Ephesians, verse 10, it is plain that the calling of the Gentiles was so strange a thing, that the angels
Eph. iii. 9, 10. themselves knew not of it till it was effected. "For this was the mystery which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God, which was now made known by the

Church to principalities and powers." The brief plain meaning of which hard place is, that by St. Paul's preaching to the Gentiles, by this new work done in the Church, to wit, the calling of the Gentiles, the angels came to understand somewhat which was before too obscure for them, till it was explained by the event, and in it the manifold wisdom of God. And this proposition I might prove to you by many topics; 1. by symptoms that their estate was desperate, and their disease ὀλέθριον κάρτα λίαν, "very, very mortal;" as that God, when He would mend a people, He punisheth them with afflictions, when He intends to stop a current of impetuous sinners, He lays the axe to the root, in a πανωλεθρία or total subversion of them; but when His punishments are spiritual, as they were here, when He strikes neither with the rod nor with the sword, but makes one sin the punishment of another, as unnatural lust of idolatry and the like; when He leaves a nation to itself, and the very judgment laid upon them makes them only less capable of mercy; then is it much to be feared that God hath little mercy intended for that people, their desertion being a forerunner of judgment without mercy. 2. I might prove it *ab exemplo*, and that exactly with a *nec datur dissimile* in Scripture, that the nine monarchies which the learned observe in Scripture, were each of them destroyed for idolatry, in which sin the heathen now received to mercy, surpass all the precedent world, and for all their many destructions, still uniformly continued in their provocation. These and the like arguments I purposely omit, as conceiving St. Peter's vision mentioned before out of the tenth of the Acts sufficiently to clear the point, and therefore judging any further enlargement of proofs superfluous, I hasten with full speed to application.

And, first, from the consideration of our estate, who being the offspring of those Gentiles, might in the justice of God have been left to heathenism, and in all probability, till St. Peter's vision discovered the contrary, were likely to have been pretermitted eternally; to make this both the motive and business of our humiliation; for there is such a Christian duty required of us, for which we ought to set apart some tithe, or other portion of time, in which we are to call our-

selves to an account for all the general guilts, for all those more catholic engagements that either our stock, our nation, the sins of our progenitors back to the beginning of the world, nay, the common corruption of our nature hath plunged us in. To pass by that ranker guilt of actual sins,—for which I trust every man here hath daily some solemn assizes to arraign himself,—my text will afford us yet some further indictments; if seventeen hundred years ago our father were then an Amorite, and mother an Hittite, if we being then in their loins, were inclosed in the compass of their idolatry; and as all in Adam, so besides that we again in the gentilism of our fathers, were all deeply plunged in a double common damnation; how are we to humble ourselves infinitely above measure; to stretch, and rack, and torture every power of our souls to its extent, thereby to enlarge and aggravate the measure of this guilt against ourselves, which hitherto perhaps we have not taken notice of? There is not a better *μαλακτικὸν* in the world, no more powerful medicine for the softening of the soul, and keeping it in a Christian tenderness, than this lading it with all the burdens that its common or private condition can make it capable of; this tiring of it out, and bringing it down into the dust in the sense of its spiritual engagements. For it is impossible for him, who hath fully valued the weight of his general guilts, each of which hath lead enough to sink the most corky, vain, fluctuating, proud, stubborn heart in the world; it is impossible, I say, for him either wilfully to run into any actual sins, or insolently to hold up his head in the pride of his integrity. This very one meditation, that we all here might justly have been left in heathenism, and that the sins of the heathens shall be imputed to us their children, if we do not repent, is enough to loosen the toughest, strongest spirit, to melt the flintiest heart, to humble the most elevated soul, to habituate it with such a sense of its common miseries, that it shall never have courage or confidence to venture on the danger of particular rebellions.

2. From the view of their ignorance or impiety, which was of so heinous importance, to examine ourselves by their indictment, 1. for our learning; 2. for our lives; 3. for the life of grace in us. 1. For our learning, whether that be not mixed

with a great deal of atheistical ignorance, with a delight, and acquiescence, and contentation in those lower elements, which have nothing of God in them; whether we have not sacrificed the liveliest and sprightfulest part of our age and souls in these philological and physical disquisitions, which if they have not a perpetual aspect and aim at divinity, if they be not set upon in that respect, and made use of to that purpose, *κάρτα βλάπτει*, saith Clement[y], their best friend, they are very hurtful and of dangerous issue; whether out of our circle of human heathen learning, whence the fathers produced precious antidotes, we have not sucked the poison of unhallowed vanity, and been fed either to a pride and ostentation of our secular, or a satiety or loathing of our theological learning, as being too coarse and homely for our quainter palates; whether our studies have not been guilty of those faults which cursed the heathen knowledge, as trusting to ourselves, or wit and good parts, like the philosophers in Athenagoras[z], *οὐ παρὰ Θεοῦ, κ.τ.λ.*, "not vouchsafing to be taught by God" even in matters of religion, but every man consulting, and believing, and relying on his own reason; again, in making our study an instrument only to satisfy our curiosity, *ὡς τἀληθοῦς θεαταὶ*, only as speculators of some unknown truths, not intending or desiring thereby either to promote virtue, good works, or the kingdom of God in ourselves, or which is the ultimate end—which only commends and blesses our study or knowledge—the glory of God in others.

2. In our lives, to examine whether there are not also many relics of heathenism, altars erected to Baalim, to Ceres, to Venus, and the like; whether there be not many amongst us whose god is their belly, their back, their lust, their treasure, or that *ἄγνωστος θεὸς*, that earthly unknown god (whom we have no one name for, and therefore is called at large) the god of the world; whether we do not with as much zeal, and earnestness, and cost, serve and worship many earthy vanities which our own fancies deify for us, as ever the heathen did their multitude and shoal of gods; and in brief, whether we have not found in ourselves the sins,

[y] [Cf. Strom. i. c. 6. § 36. p. 337. ed. Pott.]
[z] Athenag. Legat. pro Christianis. [§ 7. p. 285. A.]

as well as the blood of the Gentiles, and acted over some or all the abominations, set down to judge ourselves by, Rom. i. from the 21st verse to the end.

Lastly, for the life of grace in us, whether many of us are not as arrant heathens, as mere strangers from spiritual illumination, and so from the mystical commonwealth of Israel, as any of them; Clemens [a], *Strom.* ii. calls the life of your unregenerate man a heathen life, and the first life we have by which we live, and move, and grow, and see, but understand nothing; and it is our regeneration by which we raise ourselves ἐξ ἐθνῶν, "from being still mere Gentiles:" and Tatianus [b], further, that without the spirit we differ from beasts only κατ' ἔναρθον φωνὴν, "by the articulation of our voice." So that in fine, neither our reason, nor Christian profession, distinguisheth us either from beasts or Gentiles, only the Spirit is the *formalis ratio* by which we excel and differ from the heathen sons of darkness. Wherefore, I say, to conclude, we must in the clearest calm and serenity of our souls make a most earnest search and inquest on ourselves, whether we are yet raised out of this heathenism, this ignorance, this unregeneracy of nature, and elevated any degree in the estate of grace; and if we find ourselves still Gentiles, and—which is worse than that—still senseless of that our condition, we must strive, and work, and pray ourselves out of it, and not suffer the temptations of the flesh, the temptations of our nature, the temptations of the world, nay, the temptations of our secular, proud learning, lull us one minute longer in that carnal security, lest after a careless unregenerate natural life, we die the death of those bold, not vigilant, but stupid philosophers. And for those of us who are yet any way heathenish, either in our learning or lives; which have nothing but the name of Christians to exempt us from the judgment of their ignorance; "O Lord, make us in time sensible of this our condition, and whensoever we shall humble ourselves before Thee, and confess unto Thee the sinfulness of our nature, the ignorance of our ancestors, and every man the plague of his own heart, and repent and turn, and pray toward Thy house, then hear Thou in heaven Thy dwell-

[a] [Clemens Alex. Strom., lib. ii. c. 13. p. 459.]
[b] Or. c. Græcos, § 15. [p. 256. D. ad calc. S. Just.]

ing-place, and when Thou hearest forgive; remember not our offences, nor the offences of our heathen fathers, neither take Thou vengeance of our sins, but spare us, O Lord, spare Thy people whom Thy Son hath redeemed, and Thy Spirit shall sanctify, from the guilt and practice of their rebellions."

Now to God, who hath elected us, hath, &c.

SERMON XXV.

Acts xvii. 30.

And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent.

They which come from either mean or dishonoured progenitors, will desire to make up their fathers' defect by their own industry, φιλοκινδυνότεροι γίνονται, saith Leo in his Tactics [a], will be more forward to undertake any valiant enterprize, to recover that reputation, which their ancestors' cowardice and unworthy carriage forfeited. So doth it nearly concern the son of a bankrupt to set upon all the courses of thrift, and stratagems of frugality, to get out of that hereditary poverty in which his father's improvidence had engaged him. Thus is it also in the poverty and bankrupt estate of the soul; they who come from prodigal ancestors, which have embezzled all the riches of God's mercy, spent profusely all the light of nature, and also some sparks out of the Scriptures, and whatsoever knowledge and directions they meet with, either for the ordering of their worship, or their lives, spent it all upon harlots, turned all into the adoring of those idol-gods, wherein consists the spiritual adultery of the soul; those I say who are the stems of this ignorant, profane, idolatrous root, ought to endeavour the utmost of their powers, and will, in probability, be so wise and careful as to lay some strict obligations on themselves, to strive to some perfection in those particulars which their ancestors failed in; that if the Gentiles were perversely blind, and resolutely, peremptorily ignorant, then must their progeny strive to wipe off the guilt and avoid the punishment of their

[a] [Leo Imperator, Tactica, cap. ii. § 24. ap. Meursium. Op., tom. vi. p. 549.]

ignorance. Now this ignorance of theirs being not only by Clemens and the fathers, but by Trismegistus in his Pœmander [b], defined to be *μέθη καὶ ἀσέβεια καὶ ὕπνος ἄλογος*, "a profaneness, an irrational sleep, and drunkenness of the soul;" in sum, an ignorance of themselves and of God, and a stupid neglect of any duty belonging to either; this ignorance being either in itself or in its fruits *κακία τῆς ψυχῆς* [c], "the wickedness of the soul," and all manner of transgression; the only way for us, the successors of these ignorant Gentiles, to repair those ruins, to renew the image of God in ourselves, which their idolatrous ignorance defaced, must be to take the opposite course to them, and to provide our remedy anti-parallel to their disease, i. e., in respect of their simple ignorance, to labour for knowledge; in respect of the effects of their ignorance, idolatry, profaneness, and all manner of wickedness, to labour for piety and repentance; briefly, if their ignorance of God was an heinous sin, and virtually all kind of sin, then to esteem repentance the greatest knowledge, to approve and second the force and method of St. Paul's argument, to prescribe ourselves whatever God commands. For so here in this chapter, having discoursed over their ignorance, he makes that a motive of our repentance, and that backed with a special item from God, who now "commands every man every where to repent."

We have heretofore divided these words, and in them handled already the ignorance of the ancient heathen, which in the justice of God might have provoked Him to have pretermitted the whole world of succeeding Gentiles. We now come to the second part, the mercy of God, not imputing their ignorance to our charge, whosoever every where to the end of the world shall repent. And in this you must consider, first, God's covenant made with the Gentiles, or the receiving them into the Church, deduced out of these words, "but now commands," for all to whom God makes known His commands, are by that very cognizance known to be parts of His Church; and with all these He enters covenant, He

[b] [*ὦ λαοὶ, ἄνδρες γηγενεῖς, οἱ μέθῃ καὶ ὕπνῳ ἑαυτοὺς ἐκδεδωκότες, καὶ τῇ ἀγνωσίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, νήψατε, παύσασθε κραιπαλῶντες, θελγόμενοι ὕπνῳ ἀλόγῳ.*] — Hermes Trismegistus, Pœmander, lib. ii. prope finem.

[c] Pœmander, lib. iv. [p. 10; appended to the Nova De Universis Philosophia of Patricius. Venice, 1593.]

promiseth salvation upon performance of the condition required by His commands—repentance. Secondly, the condition itself, in the last words, "to repent." And then lastly the extent of both; the latitude of the persons with whom this covenant is made, and from whom this condition is exacted, "all men every where." And first of the first, the covenant made with the Gentiles, or the receiving them into the Church, noted in these words, "but now commands," &c.

It is observable in our common affairs, that we do not use to lay our commands on any but those who have some relation to us; a king will not vouchsafe to employ any in any peculiar service but those whom he hath entertained, and by oath admitted into his court. And it is the livery by which one is known to belong to such a family, if he be employed in either common or special service by the master of it. To express it more generally, they are called natural members of a kingdom, who are tied to obedience to all laws or customs national, who are engaged in the common burdens as well as privileges, the services as well as benefits of a subject. The ecclesiastical canons are meant and exhibited only to those, who are either in truth or profession parts of the Church; the Turk or infidel professed is not honoured so much as to be bound to them. The orders and peculiar laws of a city or country are directed to those who are either *cives* or *civitate donati;* and our oaths and obligations to these, or these local collegiate statutes, argue us, διακριτικῶς, to be members of this or that foundation. Now to whomsoever these laws and commands do belong, whosoever is thus entertained and admitted into services, is partaker also of all advantages which belong to a member of a family; and is by covenant to receive all emoluments in as ample a manner as any other of his quality. And this, briefly, is the state of the Gentiles here in the text, who, in that God commands them here to repent—which is the law and condition of the New Testament—are judged upon these grounds to be received into the covenant of the New Testament; and consequently made members of the Church. For as once it was an argument that only Jewry was God's people, because they only received His commands, and the heathen had not knowledge of His laws; so now was it as evident a proof that the

heathen were received into His Church, i. e. into the number of those whom He had culled out for salvation, because He made known His ordinances to them, entertained them in His service, and commanded them "every one every where to repent." Appian[d] observes in his proœm to his History, that the Romans were very coy in taking some nations into their dominions; they could not be persuaded by every one to be their lords; he saw himself many ambassadors from the barbarians, who came solemnly to give themselves up to the Roman greatness, ambitious to be received into the number of their dominions, *καὶ οὐ δεξάμενον βασιλέα*, "and the king would not receive such low unprofitable servants." It was esteemed a preferment, which it seems every nation could not attain to, to be under the Roman government, and commanded by the Roman laws; and there were many reasons, if we may judge by the outside, why the Gentiles should not be likely to obtain this privilege from God, to be vouchsafed His commands. For 1. they had been neazled[e] up in so many centuries of ignorance, they had been so starved with thin hard fare, under the tyranny of a continued superstition, which gave them no solid nourishment, nothing but husks and acorns to feed on, that they were now grown horrid and almost ghastly, being past all amiableness or beauty, *ἐς οὐδὲν χρήσιμοι*, "good for nothing" in the world. We see in histories that perpetual wars hinder tillage, and suffer them not to bestow that culture on the ground which the subsistence of the kingdom requires. Thus was it with the Gentiles in the time of their *θεομάχία*, their hostility with God; they generally bestowed no trimming or culture on the soul, either to improve or adorn it; and then, receiving no spiritual food from God, all passages being shut up by their idolatry, they were famished into such a meagreness, they were so ungainly and crest-fallen, that all the fat kine of Egypt according to Pharaoh's dream, all heathen learning could not mend their looks, they were still for all their philosophy, like the lean kine that had devoured the fat, yet thrived not on it; they were still poor and ill-

[d] [Appian, Hist. Rom. Præfat. § 7. tom. i. p. 8. ed. Schweigh.]

[e] [Neezle. Insinuating oneself into something snug or desirable—from nestle, no doubt. The same in Cheshire W., and in other counties probably.--Moor's Suffolk Words and Phrases, p. 246. So neezing for nesting. Ibid.]

Gen. xli. 19. favoured, "such as were not to be seen in all the land of Jewry for badness."

2. They had engaged themselves in such a course that they could scarce seem ever capable of being received into any favour with God. Polybius[e] observes it as a policy of those which were delighted in stirs and wars, to put the people upon some inhuman, cruel practice, some killing of ambassadors, or the like feat, which was unlawful even amongst enemies, that after such an action the enemy should be incensed beyond hope of reconciliation. So did Asdrubal in Appian[f] use the captive Romans with all possible cruelty, with all arts of inhumanity, flayed them, cut off their fingers, and then hanged them alive; to the end, saith he, that thereby he might make the dissensions of Carthage and Rome *ἀδιάλλακτα*, not possibly to be composed, but to be prosecuted with a perpetual hostility. This was the effect of Ahitophel's counsel to Absalom, that he should lie with his father's concubines; and this also was the devil's plot upon the Gentiles, who, as if they were not enough enemies unto God for the space of two thousand years' idolatry, at last resolved to fill up the measure of their rebellions, to make themselves, if it were possible, sinful beyond capability of mercy; and to provoke God to an eternal revenge, they must needs join in crucifying Christ, and partake of the shedding of that blood, which hath ever since so dyed the souls, and cursed the successions of the Jews. For it is plain, 1. by the kind of His death, which was Roman; 2. by His judge, who was *Cæsaris rationalis*, by whom Judæa was then governed; or, as Tacitus saith in the 15th of his Annals[g], Cæsar's procurator; all capital judgments being taken from the Jews' Sanhedrim, as they confess, "it is not lawful for us to put any one to death;" 3. by the prophecy, "They shall deliver Him to the Gentiles;" by these, I say, and many other arguments, it is plain that the Gentiles had their part and guilt in the crucifying of Christ, and so by slaying of the Son, as it is in the parable, provoked and deserved the implacable revenge of the Father. And yet for all this, God enters league, and truce, and peace with them, thinks them worthy to hear and obey His laws; nay, above the estate of

John xviii. 21. Matt. xx. 19.

[e] [Polyb. i. 70.]

[f] [Appian, lib. viii. De Reb. Punicis, c. cxviii. ed. Schweigh.]

[g] Tacitus, Annal. xv. [c. 44.]

servants, takes them into the liberty and free estate of the gospel, and by binding them to ordinances as citizens, expresseth them to be *civitate donatos cœlesti*, within the pale of the Church, and covenant of salvation. They which are overcome and taken captives in war, may by law be possessed by the victor for all manner of servitude and slavery, and therefore ought to esteem any the hardest conditions of peace and liberty as favours and mercies, ἐν χάριτι καὶ δωρεᾷ λαμβάνειν, saith Marcus in Polybius[h]; they which are conquered must acknowledge themselves beholden to the victor, if he will upon any terms allow them quarter or truce. Thus was it above all other sinners with the Gentiles of that time; after two thousand years' war with the one God, they were now fallen into His hands, ready to receive the sorest strokes, to bear the shrewdest burdens He could lay on them; had it not been then a favour above hope, to be received even as hired servants, which was the highest of the prodigal's ambition? had it not been a very hospitable carriage towards the dogs, as they are called, to suffer them to lick up those "crumbs which fell from the children's table?" Yet so much are God's mercies above the pitch of our expectation or deserts, above what we are able or confident enough to ask or hope, that He hath assumed and adopted these captives into sons. And as once by the counsel of God Jacob supplanted Esau, and thrust him out of his birth-right, so now by the mercy of God, Esau hath supplanted Jacob, and taken his room in God's Church and favour; and instead of that one language of the Jews, of which the Church so long consisted, now is come in the confusion of the Gentiles, Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and the Babel of tongues. And as once at the dispersion of the Gentiles by the miracle of a punishment, they which were all of one tongue could not understand one another, so now at the gathering of the Gentiles by a miracle of mercy[i], they which were of several tongues understood one another, and every "nation heard the Apostles speak in their own language;" noting thereby, saith Austin, that the Catholic Church should be dispersed over all nations, and speak in as many languages as the world

Luke xv. 19. Matt. xv. 26.

Acts ii. 9.

Gen. xi. 9.

Acts ii. 6.

[h] [Polybius, lib. i. c. 31. § 6.]

[i] S. Leo Magn. [vide librum de Vocatione omnium Gentium, lib. ii. c. xiv. apud S. Leonis Opera, tom. ii. p. 225. This treatise is more probably to be assigned to S. Prosper.]

hath tongues. Concerning the business of receiving the Gentiles into covenant, St. Austin is plentiful in his 18th book *de Civit. Dei*[k], where he interprets the symbolical writing, and reads the riddles of the prophets to this purpose,

Hos. i. 11. how they are called "the children of Israel," as if Esau had robbed Jacob of his name as well as inheritance; that they

Isa. liv. 1. are declared by the title of "barren and desolate," whose fruitfulness should break forth, surpass the number of the children of the married wife[l]. To this purpose doth he enlarge himself to expound many other places of the prophets, and among them the prophecy of Obadiah, from which—Edom by a *pars pro toto* signifying the Gentiles—he expressly concludes their calling and salvation[m]; but how that can hold in that place, seeing the whole prophecy is a denunciation of

Obad. ver. 10. judgments against Edom, and it is expressly read, "For thy violence against thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut out for ever;" how, I say, from that place, amongst others, this truth may be deduced, I leave to the revealers of revelations, and that undertaking sort of people, the peremptory expounders of depths and prophecies. In the meantime we have places enough of plain prediction beyond the uncertainty of a guess, which distinctly foretold this blessed catholic truth, and though Peter had not marked or remembered them so exactly, as to understand that by them the Gentiles were to be preached to, and no longer to be ac-

Acts x. counted profane and unclean, yet it is more than probable that the devil, a great contemplator, and well seen in prophecies, observed so much; and, therefore, knowing Christ's coming to be the season for fulfilling it, about that time drooped and sensibly decayed; lost much of his courage, and was not so active amongst the Gentiles as he had been; his oracles began to grow speechless, and to slink away beforehand, lest tarrying still they should have been turned out with shame. Which one thing, the ceasing of oracles, though it be by Plutarch[n], and some other of the devil's champions, referred plausibly to the change of the soil, and failing of enthusiastical vapours and exhalations; yet was it an evident argument that at

[k] [S. Aug. De Civit. Dei, lib. xviii. cap. 28. Op., tom. vii. p. 509.]
[l] [Ibid., cap. 29.]
[m] [Ibid., cap. 31.]
[n] [Plutarch., de Defectu Oracul., Op., tom. vii. p. 704, sq. Reisk.]

Christ's coming Satan saw the Gentiles were no longer fit for his turn, they were to be received into a more honourable service under the living God, necessarily to be impatient of the weight and slavery of his superstitions, and therefore it concerned him to prevent violence with a voluntary flight, lest otherwise he should with all his train of oracles have been forced out of their coasts; for Lucifer was to vanish like lightning, when the "light to lighten the Gentiles" did but begin to appear; and his laws were outdated when God would once be pleased to command. Now that, in a word, we may more clearly see what calling, what entering into covenant with the Gentiles, is here meant by God's commanding them, we are to rank the commands of God into two sorts, 1, common catholic commands, and these extend as far as the visible Church; 2, peculiar commands, inward operations of the Spirit, these are both privileges and characters, and properties of the invisible Church, i. e. the elect, and in both these respects doth He vouchsafe His commands to the Gentiles. In the first respect God hath His louder trumpets, σάλπιγγος φωνὴν μεγάλην, which all acknowledge who are in the noise of it, and that is the sound of the gospel, the hearing of which constitutes a visible Church. And thus at the preaching of the gospel, εἰς πάντα ἔθνη, all the heathens had knowledge of His laws, and so were offered the covenant if they would accept the condition. For however that place, Acts i. 25, be by one of our writers of the Church wrested, by changing—that I say not, by falsifying—the punctuation, to witness this truth, I think we need not such shifts to prove that God took some course by the means of the ministry and apostleship, to make known to all nations under heaven, i. e. to some of all nations, both His gospel and commands; "the sound of it went through all the earth," Rom. x. 18, cited out of Psalm xix. 4, though with some change of a word, their "sound" in the Romans, for their "line" in the Psalmist—caused by the Greek translators, who either read and rendered קולם for קום, or else laid hold of the Arabic notion of the word, the loud noise and clamour which hunters make in their pursuit and chase. So Mark xiv. 9, "This Gospel shall be preached throughout the world;" so Mark xvi. 15, "to every creature;" Matt. xxiv. 14, "in all the world," and many the

[Luke ii. 32.]

Matt. xxiv. 31.

Acts i. 25.

Rom. x. 18.

Ps. xix. 4.

Mark xiv. 9; xvi. 15. Matt. xxiv. 14.

like, as belongs to our last particular to demonstrate. Besides this, God had in the second respect His *vocem pedissequam,* which the prophet mentions, a voice attending us to tell us of our duty, to shew us the way, and accompany us therein. And this, I say, sounds in the heart, not in the ear, and they only hear and understand the voice, who are partakers as well of the effect as of the news of the covenant. Thus in these two respects doth He command—by His word in the ears of the Gentiles, by giving every man every where knowledge of His laws; and so in some Latin authors [o] *mandare* signifies to give notice, to express one's will, to declare or proclaim; and thus, secondly, doth He command by His Spirit in the spirits of the elect Gentiles, by giving them the benefit of adoption; and in both these respects He enters a covenant with the Gentiles—which was the thing to be demonstrated—with the whole name of them at large, with some choice vessels of them more nearly and peculiarly; and this was the thing which by way of doctrine we collected out of these words, "but now commands." Now that we may not let such a precious truth pass by unrespected, that such an important speculation may not float only in our brains, we must by way of application press it down to the heart, and fill our spirits with the comfort of that doctrine, which hath matter for our practice, as well as our contemplation. For if we do but lay to our thoughts, 1. the miracle of the Gentiles' calling—as hath been heretofore and now insisted on—and 2. mark how nearly the receiving of them into covenant concerns us their successors, we shall find real motives to provoke us to a strain and key above ordinary thanksgiving. For as Peter spake of God's promise, so it is in the like nature of God's command—which is also virtually a promise—it belonged not to them only, but it is "to you and your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." From the first, the miracle of their calling, our gratitude may take occasion much to enlarge itself. It is storied of Brasidas in the fourth of Thucydides [p], that imputing the victory which was somewhat miraculous to some more than ordinary human cause, he went presently to the temple loaded with offerings, and would not suffer the gods

[Isa. xxx. 21.]

Acts ii. 39.

[o] Justin, lib. xxiv. cap. 2.

[p] [Thucyd. iv. 116.]

to bestow such an unexpected favour on him unrewarded; and can we pass by such a mercy of our God without a spiritual sacrifice, without a daily anthem of magnificats and hallelujahs? Herodotus[q] observes it is as a proverb of Greece, that if God would not send them rain, they were to famish; for they had, said he, no natural fountains, or any other help of waters, ὅτι μὴ ἐκ τοῦ Διὸς μοῦνον, but what God from above sent. So saith Thucydides[r] in the fourth of his History, there was but one fountain within a great compass, and that none of the biggest. So also was Egypt, another part of the heathen world, to be watered only by Nilus, and that being drawn by the sun, did often succour them and fatten the land, for which all the neighbours fared the worse; for when Nilus flowed the neighbouring rivers were left dry, saith Herodotus[s]. You need not the mythology; the philosophers, as well as soil of Greece, had not moisture enough to sustain them from nature; if God had not sent them water from heaven, they and all we Gentiles had for ever suffered a spiritual thirst. Egypt and all the nations had for ever gasped for drought, if the sunshine of the gospel had not by its beams called out of the well which had no bucket, ζῶν ὕδωρ, "living or enlivening water." But by this attraction of the sun, these living waters did so break out upon the Gentiles, that all the waters of Jewry were left dry, as once the dew was on Gideon's fleece, and drought on all the earth besides. And is it reasonable for us to observe this miracle of mercy, and not return even a miracle of thanksgiving? Can we think upon it without some rapture of our souls? Can we insist on it, and not feel a holy tempest within us, a storm and disquiet, till we have some way disburdened and eased ourselves, with a pouring out of thanksgiving? That spirit is too calm, that I say not stupid, which can bear and be loaded with mercies of this kind, and not take notice of its burden; for besides those peculiar favours bestowed on us in particular, we are, as saith Chrysostom[t], in our audit of thanksgiving, to reckon up all the τὰ κοινῇ γινόμενα, "all those common benefactions of which others

John iv. 6.

Judg. vi. 37.

[q] [Herod. ii. 13.]
[r] [Thucyd. iv. 26.]
[s] [Herod. ii. 25.]
[t] [S. Chrysost. in Acta Apostol. Homil. xxxviii. Op., tom. ix. p. 292, C.]

partake with us;" for it is, saith he, an ordinary negligence in us to recount God's mercies as we confess our sins, only in gross, with an ἁμαρτωλοί ἐσμεν, καὶ εὐηργέτησε Θεὸς, "we are great sinners, and God hath abounded in mercies to us;" never calling ourselves to a strict retail either of our sins or His mercies; and this neglect, saith he, doth deprive us of a great deal of spiritual strength. For 1. the recounting of the multitude of God's mercies to us formerly might give us confidence of the continuance of them, according to St. Cyprian, *donando debet*, God's past blessings are engagements and pawns of future. 2. It is, saith he, of excellent use, πρὸς τὸ οἰκειοῦν, "to bring us acquainted" and familiar with God, and infinitely increaseth our love to Him, and desire of performing some manner of recompense. Which one thing made the heathen of old so love and respect their benefactors, that they worshipped them, and would not suffer any common real benefaction to be done them without an ἀποθέωσις to the author of it, as might be proved through all ancient writings; for on these grounds was it that they would needs sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas. In the second place, if we consider how nearly it concerns us, that if they had been pretermitted, we to the end of the world might probably have lived in the same darkness, that we now hold our right to heaven by the covenant made to them, that those commands belong also to us and our children, then we must in some reason of proportion thank God liberally for that calling of the Gentiles, as we cannot choose but do for our present adoption, and enlarge our thanksgiving not for our own only, but for that first justification, sanctification, and salvation of the Gentiles. And this effusion of our souls in thanks will prove of good use to us, both to confirm our confidence, and keep us in a Christian temper of humility and cheerful obedience. And therefore I thought good to present it to you in the first place as a duty of no ordinary moment.

Acts xiv. 13.

2. If God hath commanded, and consequently expects our obedience; if these commands concern us, and contain in them all that belongs to our salvation; if they are, as hath been proved, God's covenant with the Gentiles; then, not to be wanting to ourselves, but earnestly to labour and provide that no one circumstance of them may be without its peculiar

profit and advantage to our souls. Polybius from the war betwixt the Numidians and Uticenses observes, that if a victory gotten by the captain, be not by the soldiers prosecuted to the utmost, it likely proves more dangerous than if they had never had it; if the king, saith he, take the city[u], οἱ δὲ πολλοὶ διὰ προστήρημα ῥαθυμοῦντες, "and the multitude overjoyed with the news, begin to grow less earnest in the battle," a hundred to one but the conquered will take notice and heart from this advantage, and, as the Uticenses did, make their flight a stratagem to get the victory. Thus is it in those spiritual combats, where God is our leader, our commander, our conqueror against the devil's host; if we of His command, the οἱ πολλοὶ, the many who expect our part in the profit of the victory, do not prosecute this conquest to the utmost, to the utter discomfiting and disarming of our fugitive enemy; if we should grow secure upon the news, and neither fear nor prevent any further difficulties, we may be in more danger for that former conquest, and as it was ordinary in story, by that time we have set up our trophies, ourselves be overcome. I might prescribe you many courses, which it would concern you to undertake for the right managing of this victory, which this our commander hath not by His fighting, but by His very commanding, purchased us. But because my text requires haste, and I go on but slowly, I must omit them, and only insist on that which is specified in my text, repentance, which drives to the condition of the covenant, the matter of the command which comes next to be discussed.

The word "repent" may in this place be taken in a double sense; 1. generally for a sorrow for our sins, and on that a disburdening of ourselves of that load which did formerly press down the soul; for a sense of our former ill courses, and a desire to fit ourselves for God's service; for an humbling ourselves before God, and flying to Him as our only succour; and so it well may be called the condition of God's covenant with us, that which God requires at our hands under the gospel; for it was the first word at the first preaching of the gospel by John Baptist, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand," which, saith the text, was in effect, Matt. iii. 2.

[u] Polybius, [lib. i. c. 74. § 10.]

"Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight."
ver. 3. So that, briefly, this "repent" is a straightening and rectifying all crookedness, every distortion of the soul, and thereby a preparing of it for the receiving of Christ and embracing His gospel. 2. In a nearer relation to the first words of the verse, repentance is taken more especially by way of opposition, for a mending and forsaking of that which of old was the fault and guilt of the Gentiles, a reforming of every thing which was either formally or virtually contained in their ignorance; and what that is you shall briefly judge.

It is observed by interpreters, that doing or suffering, action or passion, are expressed in Scripture by the word knowing; so to know sin is to commit sin, to know a woman,
Matt. xxvi. 70. and the like. So Peter to the maid, "I know not what thou sayest," i. e. I am not guilty of the doing what thou imputest to me. According to which Hebraism, to know God and His laws is to worship Him, and perform them; and, consequently, to be ignorant of both is neither to worship God nor practise any thing which His laws command; and so, knowledge shall contain all piety and godly obedience, or love of God's commandments, as God is said to know those whom He loves; and ignorance, all profaneness and neglect, yea, and hatred either of God or goodness. According to which exposition are those two sayings, the one of Hermes[x] in his tenth book called *νοῦς· ἡ τρισκακία τὸ ἀγνοεῖν τὸν Θεὸν*, "the ignorance of God is all manner of sin;" the other of Pastor in Clemens[y], *μετάνοια σύνεσις μεγάλη*, "repentance is a great piece of knowledge or wisdom." So that, briefly, the recovering of the soul to the pure knowledge of God and goodness, the worshipping, loving, and obeying of God, is the thing here meant by repentance; which yet we may press into a nearer room, into one single duty, the directing all our actions to His glory; for this is in effect to worship, to obey, to love God, to worship for obedience' sake, because he commands it, to obey Him for love's sake, because we desire He should be glorified in our obedience. And this is the excellency and perfection of a Christian, infinitely above the reach of the proudest moralists; this is the repentance of a

[x] [Hermes Trismeg. (ut supr.) lib. x. ad fin.]

[y] [Hermæ Pastor (ii. 4. § 2.) ut ap. Clem. Alex. Strom. ii. 12. p. 458.]

Christian, whereby he makes up those defects which were most eminently notorious in the heathen; this is the impression of that humbling spirit, which proud heathen nature was never stamped with, for it was not so much their ignorance in which they offended God,—though that was also full of guilt, as hath been proved,—as their misusing of their knowledge to ungainly ends, as either ambition, superstition, or for satisfying their curiosity, as partly hath, and for the present needs not further to be demonstrated. Only for us, whom the command doth so nearly concern of repenting for and reforming their abuses, how shall we be cast at the bar, if we still continue in the same guilt! The orderly composition of the world, saith Athenagoras [z], the greatness, complexion, figure, and harmony of it, are *πρὸς θεοσέβειαν ἐνέχυρα ἡμῖν*, "engagements to us and pawns to oblige us to a pious worship of God." For what Philoponus observes of the doctrine of the soul, is in like manner true of all kind of learning, *εἰς ὅλον τὸν βίον τείνει δόγματα ταῦτα*, "they extend and have an influence over all our conversation;" and if they be well studied, and to purpose, leave their characters and impressions in our lives as well as our understandings; and from thence arose the Gentiles' guilt, who did only enrich their intellectual part with the knowledge and contemplation of them, no whit better their lives, or glorify God which made them. But for us, whose knowledge is much elevated above their pitch, who study and ordinarily attain to the understanding of those depths which they never fathomed, the reading of those riddles which they never heard of, the expounding of those mysteries which they never dreamt of; for us, I say, who have seen a marvellous light, thereby only to enlighten our brains and not our hearts, to divert that precious knowledge to some poor, low, unworthy ends; to gather nothing out of all our studies which may advance God's kingdom in us, this is infinitely beyond the guilt of heathenism; this will call their ignorance up to judgment against our knowledge, and in fine make us curse that light which we have used to guide us only to the chambers of death. Briefly, there was no one thing lay heavier upon the Gentiles than the not directing that measure of knowledge

[z] [Athenag. Legat. pro Christianis, § 4. [p. 283, A.]

they had to God's glory and a virtuous life; and nothing more nearly concerns us Christians to amend and repent of. For the most exquisite knowledge of nature, and more specially the most accurate skill in theological mysteries, if it float only in the brain, and sink not down into the heart, if it end not in reformation of erroneous life, as well as doctrine, and glorifying God in our knowledge of Him, it is to be reputed but a glorious, specious curse, not an enriching, but a burdening of the soul, *Aurum Tholosanum*, an unlucky merchandise, that can never thrive with the owner, but commonly betrays and destroys all other good affections and graces in us. Socrates was the first that brought morality into the schools[a], *ideoque ad hominum salutem natus est*, said an old philosopher[b]; and that made the oracle so much admire him for the wisest man in the world. At any piece of speculation the devil durst challenge the proudest philosopher amongst them; but for a virtuous life he despaired of ever reaching to it; this set him at a gaze, this posed and made a dunce of him, and forced him to proclaim the moralist the greatest scholar under heaven; *οἴησις ἱερὰ νόσος*, saith Hesychius[c] *περὶ σοφῶν*, the "making use of knowledge to ambition or puffing up, is a dangerous desperate disease," and pray God it be not *ἱερὰ* also in its other sense, a disease that attends our holiest speculations, even our study of divinity. For as Arrian[d] saith of those who read many books and digest none, so is it most true of those who do not concoct their *πολυμαθία*, and turn it into spiritual nourishment of the soul, *ἐμοῦσι καὶ ἀποπέπτουσι*, they vomit it up again, and are never the better for it; they are oppressed with this very learning, as a stomach with crudities, and thereby fall many times *εἰς στρόφους καὶ καταρροίας*, into vertigoes and catarrhs, the first of which disorders the brain, and disables it from all manner of action; or if the more classical notion of the word take place, it disaffects the bowels, entangles and distorts the entrails, and, as St. Paul complains on this occasion, leaves without natural affection,

[a] S. Augustin., De Civitate Dei, lib. viii. cap. 3, &c. [Op., tom. vii. p. 191.]

[b] [Verum Socrates, caritate patriæ ardens, et, ut Proclus ait, ad hominum salutem natus, &c. Patricius in his Plato Exotericus, p. 43, appended to his Nova De Universis Philosophia. Venice, 1593.]

[c] [Hesychius, s. v. Heraclitus, ap. Meursium. Op., tom. vii. p. 249.]

[d] [Arrian., Epicteti Dissertat., lib. i. c. 26. § 16.]

and then, 2, by the defluxion of the humours on the breast, clogs and stifles the vital parts, and in fine brings the whole man to a *φθίσις*, or corruption of all its spiritual graces. Thus have you at once the doctrine and the use of my second part, the nature of that repentance which is here meant in opposition to the Gentiles' fault, which we have shewed to be the directing of our knowledge to a sober pious end, God's glory and our own edification, together with the danger and sinfulness attending the neglect of these ends, both which are sufficient motives to stir you up, to awake and conjure you to the practice of this doctrine. To which you may add but this one more, that even some of the heathen were raised up by the study of the creatures to an admiration of God's excellency, which was a kind of glorifying His power, and those Philoponus[e] calls *τελείους φυσιολόγους*, "perfect exact naturalists;" who from physical causes ascend to divine. Witness Galen[f], *de Usu Partium*, where from the miraculous structure of the foot, he falls off into a meditation and hymn of God's providence, *δημιουργήσαντος ἡμᾶς ὕμνον ἀλήθινον*, "a psalm or holy elogy of Him that hath so wonderfully made us." So Hermes[g], in his first book of piety and philosophy, makes the only use of philosophy to return thanks to the Creator as to a good father and profitable nurse, which duty he professes himself resolved never to be wanting in; and after, in the latter end of his fifth book[h], he makes good his word, breaking out into a kind of holy rhythm, *ποῦ δὲ βλέπων εὐλογήσω σε, ἄνω, κάτω, ἔσω, κ.τ.λ.* The like might be shewed in some measure out of others, more classic heathen writers, which may briefly serve to upbraid our defects, and aggravate our offence, if we with all our natural and spiritual light go on yet in learning, as travellers in peregrination, only either as curious inquisitors of some novelties, which they may brag of at their return, or else having no other end of their travel but the journey itself, without any care to direct our studies to the advancement either of God's glory in other, or grace's kingdom in ourselves. For this is the thing no doubt here aimed at, and the performance of it

[e] [Philoponus, Comment. in Aristot. de Anima, Præf. in lib. i., ad finem.]

[f] Galen, De Usu Part., lib. iii. c. 6.

[g] [Herm. Trismeg., De Pietate et Philosophia, lib. i. ad init., p. 4.]

[h] [Id., ibid., lib. v. ad finem.]

as strictly required of us Christians, and that not some only of us, but as many as the commandment is here given to, "every man every where." So I come to my last particular, the extent and latitude of the persons with whom this covenant is made, and from whom this condition is exacted, "All men every where."

Now the universality of the persons reflects either to the preceding words, commands, or to the subsequent, the matter of these commands, repentance. From the first, the point is, that God's commands were made known by the preaching of the gospel to "all men every where." From the second, that the repentance here meant is necessary to every man that will be saved. For the first, it hath been already proved out of Scripture, that the vocal articulation of God's commands, the sound and preaching of the gospel, hath gone out into all the world, and that not *universis*, but *singulis*, directed and promulged at least to every creature, the whole Gentile world has title to it. Now for the spiritual efficacy of this voice, the "demonstration of the Spirit and of power," hath not this also waited on the voice, and in some kind or other evidenced itself in the like extensive latitude? Yes, no doubt; for there being two effects of the preaching of the word, either converting or hardening, either dissolving the wax, or stiffening the clay, you shall in every man be sure to meet with one of them.

Mark xvi. 15.

1 Cor. ii. 4.

For the conversion; what a multitude came in at the first noise of it, *primo mane*, as soon as ever the Sun of righteousness began to dawn. In the ancient sea-fights they had their λεμβάδια, little light ships, πρωτόπλοι, saith Xenophon[i], πρόπλοι, καὶ σκοποὶ, say Thucydides[k] and Polybius[l], which they sent out as spies in the night, or at day-break, to bring word how the seas were cleared; that so they might dare to make use of the first opportunity to go out with their whole navy. Thus was Job and some few other Gentiles before the Gospel, and Cornelius at the dawning of it, sent before in a manner, *ut lembi ante classem*, to spy and bring word whether the Gentiles might enter and be received; and these returning to them like Noah's dove "with an olive-leaf in her mouth," as a

Gen. viii. 11.

[i] [Xenophon, Hist. Græc., lib. v. cap. 1. § 27.]

[k] [Thucydides, lib. vi. c. 44. 46.]

[l] [Polybius, lib. i. c. liii. § 8.]

token of peace and safety to all that would venture, then did the whole navy and troop follow, then did the τὸ πλέον καὶ οἱ πολλοὶ, "the many," the rout, the common people of the world, out of all nations and conditions some, hasten and run and crowd for a part in this salvation, and "the glory of the Lord was revealed, and all flesh saw it together," as it is in the phrase of the prophecy, or in the words of the story, "there were daily added to the Church such as should be saved." Look but on the doctor of the Gentiles, as he sits in his chair in Tyrannus' school, and you shall find that at that one lecture—which indeed was two years long—all the lesser Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. The three thousand souls which were added to the Church at St. Peter's sermon, was a sufficient hour's work, and a thing so admired by the wise men of the Gentiles, that they imputed it *magicis Petri artibus et veneficis carminibus*, saith Austin[m], to some incantations and magical tricks which Peter used. And they got the dying oracle to confirm it with some supposititious verses, to the purpose forged by them; that the Christian religion was raised by Peter's witchcraft, and by it should last three hundred and sixty-five years, and then be betrayed and vanish[n]. But had these same Gentiles in this humour of malice and prejudice seen a third part of the Roman world, all the proconsular Asia, converted by one Paul's disputations, they would certainly have resolved that all the sorcery of hell or Chaldæa could never have yielded such miraculous enchantments. And this the sons of Sceva had experience of, who with all their exorcisms, and the name of Jesus added to them, could not yet imitate the Apostles in any one miracle; but the devil was too hard for them, wounded, overcame, prevailed against them. Briefly, it was more than the magic either of men or devils, which so convinced the artificers of hell, that they "brought out their books and burnt them openly;" which beside the price of their most profitable skill, were rated at 50,000 pieces of silver, which is computed to be about £6,250. "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed," and the first effect of it, conversion, was miraculously manifest, though not on all, yet on many of all people every where.

Isa. xl. 5.

[Acts ii. 47.]

Acts xix. 9.

Acts ii. 4.

Acts xix. 14.

Acts xix. 19.

[ver. 20.]

[m] S. Aug. De Civ. Dei, lib. xviii. c. 53. [Op., t. vii. p. 536, E, F.] [n] [Id., ib.]

Now for the other effect of it, the hardening of obdurate
Acts xix. 9. atheists, look on Acts xix. 9, where it is plain, that for all Paul's logic and rhetoric, "disputing and persuading for the space of three months," many were hardened and believed not. They had within them *νοῦν ἀντίτυπον*, as Theodoret calls it, a heart that would reverberate either precept or instruction, and make it rebound against the hand that sent it; *πνεῦμα παχυνόμενον*, as Philoponus[o] phrases it in his first book *de anima*, their spirits fattened and incrassated within them, stalled up and fed to such a brawniness, that neither the understanding nor the affections were capable of any impression, and so their condition proved like that of the anvil, which by many strokes is somewhat smoothed but no whit softened; all they got by one day's preaching was to enable them the better to resist the second. Every sermon of a Paul or Peter was but an alarum to set them on their guard of defence, to warn them to cast up some more trenches and bulwarks, to fortify themselves stronger against any possible invasion of God's Spirit; according to that of the Egyptian Hermes[p], speaking *περὶ δυνάμεως ἱερῶν λόγων*, which is in a Christian phrase the "power of the Scripture;" they have, saith he, this property in them, that when they meet with evil men, *μᾶλλον παροξύνουσιν εἰς κακίαν*, "they do more sharpen and egg them on to evil." Thus was the preaching of the word to all men every where attended with some effects or other, according to the materials it met with, never returned unprofitably, but either was the power of God to salvation unto all that believed, or the witness of God to condemnation to those which were hardened. Now if this precious receipt administered to all find not in all the like effect of recovering, yet from hence is neither the physic to be underprized nor the prescriber; the matter is to be imputed sometimes to the weakness and peevishness of the patient, *ὡς ἀδυνατέειν τὰ προστασσόμενα ὑπουργέειν*, "that he cannot or will not perform the prescriptions," sometimes *τὴν δύναμιν αἰτιᾶσθαι τοῦ πάθεος*, "the fault is to be laid on the stubbornness and stoutness of the disease," which turns

[o] [Philoponus, Comment. in Aristot. de Anima, Præf. in lib. i. ad finem.]

[p] [Hermes Trismegistus, De Pietate et Philosophia, p. 5. q. i. ad finem.]

every medicine into its nourishment, and so is not abated but elevated by that which was intended to assuage it, as Hippocrates[q] defines it medicinally in his book *περὶ τεχνῆς*.

So then by way of use, if we desire that these commands, this covenant offered to all men every where, may evidence itself to our particular souls in its spiritual efficacy, we must with all the industry of our spirits endeavour to remove those hinderances, which may any way perturb, or disorder, or weaken it in its working in us; *προκατασκευάσθω σοι μαλαγμάτων γένεα, κ.τ.λ.*, saith Hippocrates[r], you must furnish yourself beforehand with a shop of several softening plasters, and take some one of them as a preparative before every sermon you come to, that coming to church with a tender, mollified, waxy heart, you may be sure to receive every holy character, and impression, which that day's exercise hath provided for thee, lest otherwise, if thou shouldst come to church with an heart of ice, that ice be congealed into crystal, and by an *ἀντιπερίστασις*, the warmth of God's word not abate, but increase the coldness of a chill frozen spirit, and finding it hard and stubborn, return it obdurate. O what a horrid thing is it that the greatest mercy under heaven should by our unpreparedness be turned into the most exquisite curse that hell or malice hath in store for us! that the most precious balm of Gilead should by the malignity of some tempers be turned into poison; that the leaves which are appointed for the healing of the nations should meet with some such sores, which prove worse by any remedy; that the most sovereign *μαλακτικὸν*, or lenitive, in the world, should only work to our obduration, and the preaching of the word of mercy add to the measure of our condemnation! This is enough to persuade you by an horror into some kind of solicitude to prepare your souls to a capability of this cure, to keep yourselves in a Christian temper, that it may be possible for a sermon to work upon you, that that breath which never returns in vain may be truly gospel, happy in its message, may convert not harden you; to which purpose you must have such tools in store which the physi-

[q] [Cf. Hippocrates, *περὶ τεχνῆς*, tom. i. p. 12. Medici Græci, tom. xxi. ed. Kühn.]

[r] [Hippocrates, *περὶ εὐσχημοσύνης*, tom. i. p. 73. Kühn. ut supr.]

cian[s] speaks of, ὄργανα, καὶ μηχανὰς, καὶ σίδηρον, "instruments of spiritual surgery," to cut and prune off all luxuriant cumbersome excrescences, all rankness and dead flesh, which so oppress the soul, that the virtue of medicine cannot search to it. And for this purpose there is no one more necessary, of more continual use for every man every where, than that which here closeth my text, "repentance."

And so I come to the second respect, the universality of the persons, as it refers to the matter of the command, repentance, every man every where to repent.

And here I should shew you that repentance, both generally taken for a sorrow for sin, containing in it virtually
Acts xix. 4. faith also,—so the baptism of repentance is interpreted, Acts xix. 4, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe," &c.,—and more especially in this place taken for the directing of our knowledge to practice, and both to God's glory, as hath been shewn, is and always was necessary to every man that will be saved. For according to Aristotle's[t] rule, κατὰ παντὸς, noting both an universality of subject and circumstance, is a degree of necessity; and therefore repentance being here commanded, πᾶσι πανταχοῦ, is to be judged a condition necessary to every man who answers at the command, i. e. who expects his part in the covenant of salvation; this, I say, I might prove at large, and to that purpose vindicate the writings of some of the fathers, especially of Clemens, who, I am almost confident, is groundlessly cited for bestowing salvation on the heathen, without exacting the condition of faith and repentance, which now it were superfluous to insist on. 2. Urge it both to your brains and hearts, and by the necessity of the duty, rouse and enforce, and pursue you to the practice of it. But seeing this catholic duty is more the inspiration of the Holy Ghost than the acquisition of our labours, seeing this fundamental cardinal gift comes from the supreme donor, seeing nature is no more able spiritually to re-enliven a soul than to animate a carcass, our best endeavour will be our humiliation, our most profitable directions will prove our prayers, and what our frailty cannot reach to, our devotions shall obtain.

[s] Hippocrates, [ibid., p. 72.]

[t] [Aristot. Post. Anal., lib. i. c. 4.]

And let us labour and pray, and be confident, that God which hath honoured us with His commands will enable us to a performance of them, and having made His covenant with us, will fulfil in us the condition of it; that the thundering of His word being accompanied with the still voice of His Spirit, may suffer neither repulse nor resistance; that our hearts being first softened, then stamped with the Spirit, may be the images of that God that made them; that all of us every where endeavouring to glorify God in our knowledge, in our lives, in our faith, in our repentance, may for ever be glorified by Him, and through Him, and with Him hereafter.

Now to Him that hath elected us, hath created, redeemed, &c.

SERMON XXVI.

Rom. i. 26.

For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections.

In this most accurate Epistle that ever the pen of man could lay title to, in which all the counsels, and proceedings, and methods of God in the work of our salvation are described, our Apostle in his discourse goes on the same way that God is said to do in His decree; lays the foundation of it as low and deep as possible, begins with them as it were *in massa*, and though they were already Romans and Christians, yet before he openeth heaven gates to them, and either teaches or suffers them to be saints, he stays them awhile in the contemplation of their impurity, and damned neglected estate of the stock they come from; looks upon them as "polluted or trodden down in their own blood," as the phrase is. He ploughs and harrows, and digs as deep as possible, that the seed which he meant to sow might be firm rooted, that their heaven might be founded in the centre of the earth, and their faith being secured by the depth of its foundation, might increase miraculously both in height and fruitfulness. Thus in the latter part of this first chapter doth he shew them the estate and rebellions, and punishment of their heathen ancestors, that the unregenerate man may in that glass see his picture at the length, the regenerate humble himself in a thankful horror, overjoyed, and wondering to observe himself delivered from such destruction. And that all may be secured from the danger of the like miscarriage, he sets the whole story of them distinctly before their eyes. 1. How the law and light of nature was sufficient to have instructed them into the sight and acknowledgment of God, and therefore that they could not pretend want of means to direct them to

Ezek. xvi. 6.

His worship. 2. That they contemned and rejected all the helps and guidances that God and nature had afforded them; and that therefore, 3. God had deserted, and given them up unto the pride, and luxury, and madness of their own hearts, all "vile affections;" for this is the force of the illation, they abused those instructions which God had printed in the creature to direct them, and therefore He will bestow no more pains on them to so little purpose; their own reason convinced them there was but one God, and yet they could not hold from adoring many, and therefore He will not be troubled to rein them in any longer; for all His ordinary restraints they will needs run riot, and "for this cause God gave them up to vile affections." So that in the text you may observe the whole state and history of a heathen, natural, unregenerate life, which is a progress or travel from one stage of sinning to another, beginning in a contempt of the light of nature, and ending in the brink of hell, all vile affections. For the discovery of which we shall survey, 1. The law or light of nature, what it can do; 2. The sin of contemning this law or light, both noted in the first words, "for this cause," that is, because they did reject that which would have stood them in good stead; 3. The effect or punishment of this contempt, sottishness leading them stupidly into all vile affections; and lastly, the inflicter of this punishment and manner of inflicting of it, "God gave them up;" and first of the first, the law and light of nature, what it can do.

To suppose a man born at large, left to the infinite liberty of a creature, without any terms or bounds, or laws to circumscribe him, were to bring a river into a plain, and bid it stand on end, and yet allow it nothing to sustain it; were to set a babe of a day old into the world, and bid him shift for a subsistence; were to bestow a being on him only that he may lose it, and perish before he can ever be said to live. If an infant be not bound in, and squeezed, and swathed, he will never thrive in growth or feature, but as Hippocrates[a] saith of the Scythians, for want of girdles, run all out into breadth and ugliness. And therefore it cannot agree either with the mercy or goodness of either God or nature to create

[a] [Hippocrates, De aëre, locis et aquis, tom. i. p. 559.]

men without laws, or to bestow a being upon any one without a guardian to guide and manage it. Thus, lest any creature for want of this law any one moment should immediately sin against its creation, and no sooner move than be annihilated; the same wisdom hath ordered that his very soul shall be his law-giver, and so the first minute of its essence should suppose it regular. Whence it is that some atheists in Theophilus *ad Autolycum*[b], which said that all things were made by chance and of their own accord, yet affirmed that when they were made they had a God within them to guide them, their own conscience, and in sum affirmed, *μόνον εἶναι Θεὸν συνείδησιν*, "that there was no other God in the world." Aristotle[c] observes that in the creatures which have no reason phantasy supplies its place, and does the bee as much service to perform the business of its kind as reason doth in the man. Thus further in them whose birth in an uncivilized country hath deprived of any laws to govern them, reason supplies their room, *λόγος φύσει νόμος*, saith Arius Didymus[d], "reason is naturally a law," and hath as sovereign dictates with it, pronounceth sentence every minute from the tribunal within, as authoritatively as ever the most powerful Solon did in the theatre. There is not a thing in the world purely and absolutely good, but God and nature within commends and prescribes to our practice; and would we but obey their counsels and commands, it were a way to innocence and perfection that even the Pelagians never dreamt of. To speak no further than will be both profitable and beyond exception, the perfectest law in the world is not so perfect a rule for our lives as this *ἔμφυτος καὶ φυσικὸς νόμος*, as Methodius[e] calls it, "this law of nature born with us," is for these things which are subject to its reach. Shall I say Scripture itself is in some respect inferior to it? I think I shall not prejudice that blessed volume, for though it be as far from the least spot or suspicion of imperfection as falsehood, though it be true, perfect, and righteous altogether, yet doth it not so evidence itself to my dull soul; it

[b] Theophil. ad Autolyc., lib. ii. § 4. [Ad calc. S. Just. M., p. 349, D.]

[c] [Arist. Metaph. A. c. 1.]

[d] [Euseb. Præp. Evang., lib. xv. c. 15. p. 817, D.]

[e] [Ap. Photium, Biblioth., p. 915. ed. Hoeschel.]

speaks not so clearly and irrefragably, so beyond all contradiction and demur to my atheistical understanding, as that law which God hath written in my heart. For there is a double certainty, one of adherence, another of evidence, one of faith, the other of sense; the former is that grounded on God's word, more infallible because it rests on divine authothority, the latter more clear, because I find it within me by experience. The first is given to strengthen the weakness of the second, and is therefore called *βεβαιότερος λόγος*, "a more firm sure word;" the second given within us to explain the difficulties and obscurities of the first, *αὐτόπται γενηθέντες*, we "saw it with our eyes:" so that Scriptures being conceived into words and sentences, are subject either not to be understood or amiss; and may either be doubted of by the ignorant, or perverted by the malicious. You have learnt so many words without book, and say them minutely by heart, and yet not either understand or observe what you are about; but this unwritten law, which no pen but that of nature hath engraven, is in our understandings, not in words but sense, and therefore I cannot avoid the intimations; it is impossible either to deny or doubt of it, it being written as legible in the tables of our hearts, as the print of humanity in our foreheads. The commands of either Scripture or emperor may be either unknown or out of our heads, when any casual opportunity shall bid us make use of them; but this law of the mind is at home for ever, and either by intimation or loud voice, either whispers or proclaims its commands to us; be it never so gagged it will mutter, and will be sure to be taken notice of when it speaks softliest. To define in brief what this law of nature is, and what offices it performs in us, you are to know that at that grand forfeiture of all our inheritance,—goods truly real and personal,—all those primitive endowments of soul and body upon Adam's rebellion, God afterwards, though He shined not on us in His full image and beauty, yet cast some rays and beams of that eternal light upon us; and by an immutable law of His own counsel hath imprinted on every soul that comes down to a body, a secret, unwritten, yet indelible law, by which the creature may be warned what is good or bad, what agreeable, what hurtful to the obtaining of the end of its creation. Now

a 2 Pet. i. 19.

ver. 16.

these commands or prescriptions of nature, are either in order to speculation or practice, to increase our knowledge or direct our lives. The former sort I omit, as being fitter for the schools than pulpit to discourse on, I shall meddle only with those that refer to practice, and those are either common, which they call first principles, and such are in every man in the world equally, *et secundum rectitudinem et notitiam*, saith Aquinas[f]; every one doth both conceive them in his understanding what they mean, and assent to them in his will, that they are right and just, and necessary to be performed; and of this nature are the worship of God and justice amongst men; for that *lumen super nos signatum*, in Bonaventure's[g] phrase, that "light which nature hath sealed and imprinted on our souls," is able to direct us in the knowledge of those moral principles, without any other help required to persuade us; or else they are particular and proper to this or that business, which they call conclusions drawn out of these common principles; as when the common principle commands just dealing, the conclusion from thence commands to restore what I have borrowed, and the like. And these also if they be naturally and directly deduced, would every man in the world both understand and assent to; did not some hinderance come in, and forbid or suspend either his understanding or assent. Hinderances which keep him from the knowledge or conceiving of them, are that confusion and chaos, and black darkness, I had almost said that Tophet and hell of sensual affections, which suffers not the light to shew itself, and indeed so stifles and oppresses it, that it becomes only as hell fire, not to shine but burn, not to enlighten us what we should do, but yet by gripes and twinges of the conscience to torment us for not doing of it. And this hinderance the Apostle calls the vanity of imaginations by which a foolish heart is darkened. Hinderances which keep us from assenting to a conclusion in particular which we do understand, are sometimes good; as, first, a sight of some greater breach certain to follow the performance of this; so though I understand that I must restore every man his own, yet I will never return a knife to one that I see re-

Rom. i. 21.

[f] S. Thom. Aq. Summa 1ma 2æ qu. 94. [art. 4.]

[g] S. Bonaventura, in lib. ii. Sentent. Dist. 39. Art. 3. quæst. 2. [conclus.]

solved to do some mischief with it; and 2. Divine laws, as the command of robbing the Egyptians, and the like; for although that in our hearts forbid robbing, yet God is greater than our hearts, and must be obeyed when He prescribes it. [Exod. xi. 2.] Hinderances in this kind are also sometimes bad; such are either habitude of nature, custom of country, which made the Lacedæmonians esteem theft a virtue; or again the tyranny of passions; for every one of these hath its several project upon the reasonable soul, its several design of malice either by treachery or force to keep it hoodwinked, or cast it into a lethargy, when any particular virtuous action requires to be assented to by our practice. If I should go so far as some do, to define this law of nature to be the full will of God written by His hand immediately in every man's heart after the fall, by which we feel ourselves bound to do every thing that is good and avoid every thing that is evil, some might through ignorance or prejudice guess it to be an elevation of corrupt nature above its pitch, too near to Adam's integrity; and yet Zanchy[h], who was never guessed near a Pelagian, in his fourth tome, lib. i. c. 10. Thesis 8, would authorize every part of it, and yet not seem to make an idol of nature, but only extol God's mercy, who hath bestowed a soul on every one of us with this character and impression, Holiness to the Lord; which though it be written unequally, in some more than others, yet saith he, in all in some measure so radicated, that it can never be quite changed or utterly abolished. However I think we may safely resolve with Bonaventure[i] out of Austin against Pelagius, *Non est parum accepisse naturale indicatorium,* it is "no small mercy that we have received a natural glass," in which we may see and judge of objects before we venture on them, a power of distinguishing good from evil[k], which even the malice of sin and passions in the highest degree cannot wholly extinguish in us; as may appear by Cain, the voice of whose conscience spake as loud within him as that of his brother's blood; as also in the very damned, whose worm of sense, not penitence for what they have done in their flesh, shall for ever bite and

[h] Zanchii Opera Theologica, tom. iv. p. 190. Genev. 1619.

[i] [S. Bonaventura, ut supr., quoting S. August. de Libero Arbitrio, lib. iii. c. 20. Op., tom. i. p. 633, A.]

[k] Which Damascene calls, lucem naturalem intellectus, as the schools have it from him.—Wiggers. [supr., p. 277.]

gripe them hideously. This light indeed may either by, first, blindness, or secondly, delight in sinning, or thirdly, peremptory resolvedness not to see, be for the present hindered, *secundum actum*, from doing any good upon us. He that hath but a veil before his eyes, so long cannot judge of colours; he that runs impetuously cannot hear any one that calls to stop him in his career; and yet all the while the light shines, and the voice shouts; and therefore when we find in Scripture some men stupified by sin, others void of reason, we must not reckon them absolutely so, but only for the present besotted. And again, though they have lost their reason, as it moves *per modum deliberationis*, yet not as *per modum naturæ*, their reason which moves them by deliberation and choice to that which is good, is perhaps quite put out or suspended; but their reason which is an instinct of nature, a natural motion of the soul to the end of its creation, remains in them though it move not, like a ship at hull and becalmed is very still and quiet, and though it stir not evidently, yet it hath its secret heaves and plunges within us.

Now that the most ignorant, clouded, unnurtured brain amongst you may reap some profit from this discourse, let him but one minute of his life be at so much leisure as to look into his own heart, and he shall certainly find within him that which we have hitherto talked of, his own soul shall yield him a comment to my sermon; and if he dare but once to open his eyes, shall shew him the law and light of nature in himself, which before he never dreamt of. Of those of you that ever spared one minute from your worldly affairs to think of your spiritual, there is one thought that suddenly comes upon you, and makes short work of all that spiritual care of yourselves. You conceive that you are of yourselves utterly unable to understand, or think, or do any thing that is good, and therefore you resolve it a great pain to no purpose ever to go about so impossible a project. God must work the whole business in you, you are not able of yourselves so much as either to see, or move, and that is the business which by chance you fell upon and as soon shook off again, and being resolved you never had any eyes, you are content to be for ever blind, unless, as it was wont to be in the old tragedies, some *θεὸς ἀπὸ μηχανῆς*, some new super-

natural power come down and bore your foreheads, and thrust and force eyes into your heads. It is a blessed desire and gracious humility in any one to invoke God to every thought they venture on, and not to dare to pretend to the least sufficiency in themselves, but to acknowledge and desire to receive all from God; but shall we therefore be so ungratefully religious as for ever to be a craving new helps and succours, and never observe or make use of what we have already obtained, as it is observed of covetous men, who are always busied about their incomes, are little troubled with disbursements, *ἀκαταλλήλοις λήψεσι, καὶ δόσεσι*[1], "without any proportion betwixt their receipts and expenses." Shall we be so senseless as to hope that the contempt of one blessing will be a means to procure us as many? I told you that God had written a law in the hearts of every one of you, which once was able, and is not now quite deprived of its power to furnish with knowledge of good and evil; and although by original, and actual, and habitual sin this inheritance be much impaired, this stock of precepts drawn low; yet if you would but observe those directions which it would yet afford you, if you would but practise whatever that divine light in your souls should present and commend to you, you might with some face petition God for richer abilities, and with better confidence approach and beg, and expect the grace that should perfect you to all righteousness. In the meantime, bethink yourselves how unreasonable a thing it is that God should be perpetually casting away of alms on those who are resolved to be perpetually bankrupts; how it would be reckoned prodigality of mercies, to purchase new lands for him that scorns to make use of his inheritance. As ever you expect any boon from God, look, I conjure you, what you have already received, call in your eyes into your brains, and see whether your natural reason there will not furnish you with some kind of profitable, though not sufficient directions, to order your whole lives by; bring yourselves up to that staidness of temper, as never to venture on any thing, till you have asked your own soul's advice whether it be to be done or no; and if you can but observe its dictates, and keep

[1] Arrian. Dissert. Epicteti, [lib. ii. c. 9. § 12.]

your hands to obey your head; if you can be content to abstain when the soul within you bids you hold, you shall have no cause to complain that God hath sent you impotent into the world; but rather acknowledge it an invaluable mercy of His, that hath provided such an eye within you to direct you, if you will but have patience to see; such a curb to restrain and prevent you, if thou wilt only take notice of its checks. It is a thing that would infinitely please the reader to observe, what a price the heathen themselves set upon this light within them, which yet certainly was much more dimmed and obscured in them by their idolatry and superstition, than I hope it can be in any Christian soul by the unruliest passion. Could ever any one speak more plainly and distinctly of it than the Pythagoreans and Stoics have done, who represent conscience not only as a guide and moderator of our actions, but as *ἐπίτροπον δαίμονα*, "a tutelary spirit," or angel, or genius, which never sleeps or dotes, but is still present and employed in our behalf? And this Arrian[k] specifies to be the reasonable soul, which he therefore accounts of as a part of God sent out of His own essence, *μόριον καὶ ἀποσπασμάτιον*, "a piece or shred," or as others more according to modest truth call it, *ἀπαύγασμα*, "a ray or beam" of that invisible sun, by which our dull, inactive, frozen bodies, after the fall, were warmed and re-enlivened. Now if any one shall make a diligent inquisition in himself, shall, as the philosopher in his cynical humour, light a candle to no purpose, or [Jer. v. 1.] as the Prophet Jeremy, seek and make hue and cry after a man through all Jerusalem, and yet not meet with him; if, I say, any body shall search for this light in himself, and find all darkness within, then will you say I have all this while possessed you with some fancies and ideas, without any real profit to be received from them; you will make that [John xx. 13.] complaint as the women for our Saviour, we went to seek for Him, and when we went down all was dark and emptiness, "They have taken Him away, and I know not where they have laid Him." Nay, but the error is in the seeker, not in my directions; he that would behold the sun must stay till the cloud be over; he that would receive from the fire, either light or warmth, must take the pains to remove

[k] [Arrian. Dissertat. Epicteti, lib. i. c. 14. §§ 6, 12.]

the ashes. There be some encumbrances which may hinder the most active qualities in the world from working, and abate the edge of the keenest metal. In sum, there is a cloud, and gloom, and vail within thee, like that darkness on the face of the deep, when the earth was תהו ובהו, "without form and void," Gen. i. 2. or like that at Lot's door among the Sodomites, or that of Egypt, thick and palpable; and this have we created to ourselves, a sky full of tempestuous, untamed affections; this cloud of vapours have we exhaled out of the lower part of our soul, our sensitive faculty; and therewith have we so filled the air within us with sad, black meteors, that the sun in its zenith, the height or pride of its splendour, would scarce be able to pierce through it. So that for to make a search for this light within thee, before thou hast removed this throng and crowd of passions which encompass it, and still to complain thou canst not meet with it, were to bring news that the sun is gone out when a tempest hath only masked it, or to require a candle to give thee light through a mud wall. Thou must provide a course to clear the sky, and then thou shalt not need to entreat the sun to shine on thee; especially if this cloud fall down in a shower, if thou canst melt so thick a viscous meteor as those corrupt affections are, into a soft rain, or dew of penitent tears, thou mayest then be confident of a fair bright sunshine. For I dare promise that never humble, tender, weeping soul, had ever this light quite darkened within it, but could at all times read and see the will of God and the law of its creation, not drawn only, but almost engraven and woven into its heart. For these tears in our eyes will spiritually mend our sight; as whatever you see through water, though it be represented somewhat dimly, yet seems bigger and larger than if there were no water in the way, according to that rule in the optics, whatever is seen through a thicker medium seems bigger than it is. And then by way of use, shall we suffer so incomparable a mercy to be cast away from us? Shall we only see and admire, and not make use of it? Shall we fence, as it were, and fortify our outward man with walls and bulwarks, that the inner man may not shine forth upon it? Or shall we like silly improvident flies make no other use of this candle but only to singe, and burn, and consume ourselves by its flame; receive only

[Gen. xix. 11; Exod. x. 21.]

so much light from it as will add to our hell and darkness? It is a thing that the flintiest heart should melt at, to see such precious mercies undervalued, such incomparable blessings either contemned or only improved into curses. Arrian calls those in whom this light of the soul is, as I shewed you, clouded and obscured, *νεκρὰ* and *σαρκίδια*[l], "dead trunks and carcasses of flesh," and to keep such men in order were human laws provided, which he therefore calls *ταλαιπώρους τοὺς τῶν νεκρῶν νόμους*[m], "miserable hard laws to keep dead men in compass," and again, *γῆν καὶ βάραθρον*, "earth and hell," the places to which dead bodies are committed. And certainly, if so, then by way of contrary, all the life that we possess is but by obedience to this law within us, and it is no longer to be called life, but either sleep, or death, or lethargy, every minute that we move out of the circle of its directions. There is not a step, or moment in our lives, but we have a special use and need of this law to manage us; every enterprise of our thoughts or actions will yield some difficulty which we must hold up, and read, and judge of by this candle; nay, sometimes we have need of a glass or instrument to contract the beams and light of it, or else it would scarce be able to get through to our actions; passion, and folly, and the atheism of our lives hath so thickened the
Mal. ii. 15. medium. Wherefore in brief, remember that counsel, "take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth;" the wife of his youth, i. e. saith Jerome's gloss[n], *legem naturalem scriptam in corde*, the law of nature written in his heart, which was given him in the womb as a wife and help to succour him. Let us set a value on this polar star within us, which hath, or shall have an influence, at least directions on all our actions; let us increase, and nourish, and make much of the sparks still warm within us. And if scholars and antiquaries prize nothing so high as a fair manuscript or ancient inscription, let us not contemn that which God's own finger hath written within us, lest the sin of the contempt make us more miserable, and the mercy profit us only to make us inexcusable. And so I come to

[l] [Epicteti Dissert., lib. i. c. 9. § 19; and lib. i. c. 3. § 5, &c.]

[m] [lib. i. c. 13. § 5.]

[n] [S. Hieron. Comment. in Malach. iii. 15. Op., tom. vi. p. 967, D.]

my second part, the sin of contemning or rejecting this law. For this cause He gave them up, i. e. because the contempt of His law thus provoked Him.

The guilt arising from this contempt shall sufficiently be cleared to you by observing and tracing of it, not through every particular, but in general through all sorts of men since the fall, briefly reducible to these three heads, first, the heathens, secondly, the Jews, thirdly, present Christians; and then let every man that desires a more distinct light descend and commune with his own heart, and so he shall make up the observation.

The heathens' sin will be much aggravated, if we consider how they reckoned of this law, as the square, and rule, and canon of their actions, and therefore they will be inexcusable who scarce be ever at leisure to call to it to direct them, when they had use of it. The stoic[o] calls it *ἐπαγγελίαν ἀνθρώπου*, the "promise that every man makes," the obligation that he is bound in to nature at his shaping in the womb, and upon which condition his reasonable soul is at his conception demised to him; so that whosoever puts off this obedience doth, as he goes on, renounce and even proclaim his forfeiture of the very soul he lives by, and by every unnatural, that is, sinful action, *ἀπολύει τὸν ἄνθρωπον*, "destroys the natural man" within him, and by a prodigious regeneration is in a manner transubstantiate into a beast of the field. Which conceit many of them were so possessed with, that they thought in earnest that it was ordinary for souls to walk from men into cocks and asses, and the like, and return again at nature's appointment, as if this one contempt of the law of nature were enough to unman them and make them without a figure, comparable, nay, co-essential to the beasts that perish. It were too long to shew you what a sense the wisest of them had of the helps that light could afford them; so that one of them cries out confidently, *ἔαν πάντες οἱ νόμοι*[p], *κ.τ.λ.* "If all other laws were taken out of the world, we philosophers would still live as we do;" those directions

[o] [Arrian. Epicteti Dissert., lib. ii. c. 9. § 1.]

[p] [*οὗτος ἐρωτηθεὶς τί πλέον ἔχουσιν οἱ φιλόσοφοι, ἔφη, ἂν πάντες οἱ νόμοι ἀναιρεθῶσιν, ὁμοίως βιώσομεν.*—Hesychius, De Viris Claris. s. v. Aristippus. ap. Meursium. Op., tom. vii. p. 212.]

within us would keep us in as much awe as the most imperious or severest lawgiver. And again, how they took notice of the perverseness of men in refusing to make use of it; for who, saith one, ever came into the knowledge of men without this ἔμφυτος ἔννοια, this knowledge and discretion of good and evil, as old in him as his soul? And yet who makes any use of it in his actions? nothing so ordinary as to betray, and declare that we have it, by finding fault, and accusing vices in other men; by calling this justice, this tyranny, this virtue, this vice in another, whilst yet we never are patient to observe or discern aught of it in ourselves. Τίς ἡμῶν φείδεται[q], κ.τ.λ., "Whoever spares to call injustice which he sees in another by its own name?" for his own reason tells him it is so, and he must needs give it its title. But when the case concerns his own person, when his passions counsel him against the law within him, then is he content not to see, though it shine never so bright about him; and this was one degree of their guilt, that they observed the power of it in their speculations, and made use of it also to censure and find fault with others; but seldom or never strived to better themselves, or straighten their own
Rom. i. 21. actions by it. Again, to follow our apostle's argument, and look more distinctly upon them in their particular chief sins
ver. 24. which this contempt produced in them, you shall find them in the front to be idolatry and superstition, in the verses next before my text; "When they knew God they glorified Him not as God," "but changed His glory into an image," &c. And then we may cry out with Theodoret[r] in his θεραπευτ. θεοχάρακτα πάλαι γράμματα διέφθειρεν ὁ δυσσεβείας πλάνος, "the errors and vanities of their worship hath rased out all the characters that God anciently had written in them." And can any man shew a greater contempt to a book, or writing, than to tear, and scrape, and scratch out every letter in it? The first voice of nature in the creature which it uttered even in the cradle, when it was an infant in the world, and therefore perhaps, as children are wont, not so plainly and syllabically, and distinctly, as could have been wished, is the acknowledgment and worship of one eternal God,

[q] [Arrian. Epicteti Dissert., lib. ii. c. 11. § 3.]

[r] [Theodoret. Therapeut., p. 54. ed. Gaisford.]

Creator of that soul we breathe by, and world we live in; as one simple, incorporeal, everlasting essence; and thus far, no doubt, could nature proclaim in the heart of every Gentile, though it was by many of them either silenced or not hearkened to, which if it were doubted of, might be deduced out of the 19th verse of this chapter, "God hath shewed unto them," &c. Now this light shining not equally in all eyes, some being more overspread with a film of ignorance, stupid conditions and passions, and the like, yet certainly had enough to express their contempt of it, "so that they are without excuse." All that would ever think of it, and were not blind with an habit of sottishness, acknowledged a God, yet none would think aright of Him. Some would acknowledge Him a simple essence, and impossible to be described or worshipped aright by any image, as Varro an heathen observes, that the city and religion of old Rome continued one hundred and seventy years without any images of the gods in it[s]. Yet even they which acknowledged Him simple from all corporeity and composition, would not allow Him single from plurality. Jupiter and Saturn, and the rest of their shoal of gods, had already got in and possessed both their temples and their hearts. In sum, their understandings were so gross within them, being fattened and incrassate with magical phantasms, that let the truth within them say what it would, they could not conceive the deity without some quantity, either corporeity or number; and either multiply this god into many, or make that one god corporeous. And then all this while how plainly and peremptorily, and fastidiously, they rejected the guidance of nature, which in every reasonable heart counselled, nay, proclaimed the contrary; how justly they provoked God's displeasure and desertion, by their forsaking and provoking Him first by their foolish imaginations, I need not take pains to insist on. Aristotle[t] observes in his Rhetoric that a man that hath but one eye loves that very dearly, *ἀγάπητον καὶ μόνον*, and sets a far higher price on it, is much more tender over it than he that hath two; so he that hath but one son cannot choose but be very fond of him,

Rom. i. 19.

ver. 20.

[s] [S. Origen. c. Celsum, lib. i. § 4, sq. Op., tom. i. p. 323. Clemens Alexandr. Strom., lib. i. c. 15. § 71. p. 359. (ad init.)]

[t] [Aristot. Rhet., lib. i. c. 7. ad fin.]

and the greatest lamentation that can be expressed, is but a shadow of that which is for one's only son, as may appear, when it is observed that *μονογενὴς* and *ἀγάπητος*, the "only-begotten" and the "beloved" are taken in Scripture promiscuously as signifying all one. And then, what a price should the heathen have set upon this eye of nature, being *μονόφθαλμοι*, having no other eye to see by? having neither Scripture, nor the Spirit, those two other glorious eyes of the world, to enlighten them; and therefore being sure, by the contemning and depriving themselves of this light, to turn all into horrible darkness. It would strike a man into agony of pity and amazement to see a world of Gentiles for many years thus imprisoned, and buried in a dungeon and grave of invincible idolatrous ignorance; and from thence engaged in inevitable hell, as it is in the book of Wisdom, and all this directly by contemning this first and only-begotten light in them, which God set in the firmaments of their hearts, to have led and directed them in a more comfortable way. And this, or as bad, is every unregenerate man's case exactly, if they be not forewarned by their elder brethren the heathens' example; as we shall anon have more leisure to insist on.

Amos viii. 10; Zech. xii. 10.

[Wisd. xvii. 14.]

Secondly, among the Jews, under which name I contain all the people of God, from Adam to Christ, it is a lamentable contemplation to observe, and trace the law and the contempt of it; like a Jacob at the heels supplanting it in every soul which it came to inhabit. Those characters of *verum* and *bonum* which in Adam were written in a statelier copy, and fairer manuscript than our slow undervaluing conceits can guess at; nay, afterwards explained with a particular explication to his particular danger; "Of the tree of knowledge," &c., "thou shalt not eat." Yet how were they by one slender temptation of the serpent presently sullied and blurred! so that all the aqua fortis and instruments in the world will never be able to wash out or erase that blot; or ever restore that handwriting in our hearts to the integrity and beauty of that copy in its primitive estate. And since, when by that sin darkness was in a manner gone over their hearts, and there remained in them only some tracks and reliques of the former structure, the glory whereof was like that of the second temple, nothing comparable to the beauty

Gen. ii. 17.

of the first; instead of weeping with a loud voice, as many of the priests and Levites did, or building, or repairing of it with all alacrity, as all Israel did through that whole book; their whole endeavour and project was even to destroy the ruins, and utterly finish the work of destruction which Adam had begun, as being impatient of that shelter which it would yet, if they would but give it leave, afford them. Thus that *συντήρησις* and *συνείδησις*, two sparks of that primitive sacred flame, which came from heaven still alive and warm, though weak in them, intended by God to direct them in His will, and for ever set either as their funeral pile or their ordeal fire, their punishment or acquittal, either as their devil or their God, to accuse, or else excuse them, were both in their practice neglected and slighted; nay, in a manner oppressed and stifled. For any natural power of doing good, God knows, it was utterly departed; and therefore this thin measure of knowledge or judgment betwixt good and evil that was left them (which my awe to God's sincere love of His creature makes me hope and trust He bestowed on them for some other end than only to increase their condemnation, to stand them in some stead in their lives, to restrain and keep them in from being extremely sinful;) this, I say, they horribly rejected, and stopt their ears against that charmer in their own bosoms, and would not hear that soft voice which God had still placed within them, to upbraid their ways and reprove their thoughts. What a provocation this was of God's justice, what an incentive of His wrath, may appear by that terrible promulgation of the ten commandments at mount Sinai. They despised the law in their hearts, where God and nature whispered it in calmly, insensibly, and softly; and therefore now it shall be thundered in their ears in words, and those boisterous ones, at which the "whole mount quaked greatly," Exod. xix. 18. And in the 16th verse, it must be ushered with variety of dismal meteors upon the mount, and the voice of a "trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that was in the camp trembled." Thus upon their contempt and peevishness was this manuscript put in print, this privy seal turned into a proclamation, and that a dreadful one, bound and subscribed, with a "Cursed is he that continues not in every tittle of it to

Ezra iii. 12.

Exod. xix. 18.

ver. 16.

perform it." Meanwhile the matter is not altered, but only the dispensation of it. That which till then had taught men in their hearts, and had been explained from tradition, from father to son, Adam instructing Seth, and Seth Enoch, in all righteousness, is now put into tables, that they may have eyes to see, that would not have hearts to understand, that the perverse may be convinced, and that he that would not before see himself bound, may find and read himself accursed. And after all this, yet is not the old law within them either cast away or cancelled by the promulgation of the other; for all the book is printed, the old copy is kept *in archivis*, though, perhaps, as it always was, neglected, soiled, and moth-eaten, and he shall be censured either for ambition or curiosity, that shall ever be seen to enquire, or look after it. Still I say, throughout all their ways, and arts, and methods of rebellions, it twinged, and pricked within, as God's judgments attended them without, and as often as sword, or plague wounded them, made them acknowledge the justice of God, that thus rewarded their perverseness. Nay, you shall see it sometimes break out against them, when perhaps the written law spake too softly for them to be understood. Thus did David's heart smite him when he had numbered the people; though there was no direct commandment against mustering or enrolment, yet his own conscience told him that he had done it either for distrust, or for ostentation, and that he had sinned against God in trusting and glorying in that arm of flesh, or paid not the tribute appointed by God on that occasion. To conclude this discourse of the Jews, every rebellion and idolatry of theirs was a double breach of a double law, the one in tables, the other in their heart; and could they have been freed from the killing letter of the one, the wounding sense of the other would still have kept them bound, as may appear in that business of crucifying Christ, where no human law-giver or magistrate went about to deter them from shedding His blood, or denying His miracles, yet many of their own hearts apprehended, and violently buffeted, and scourged, and tormented them. At one time when they are most resolved against Him, the whole senate is suddenly pricked, and convinced within, and express it with a "surely this man doth many miracles."

[1 Sam. xxiv. 10.]

Exod. xxx. 12.

John xi. 48.

At another time at the top and complement of the business, Pilate is deterred from condemning, and though the fear of the people made him valiant, yet, as if he contemned this voice of his conscience against his will, with some reluctance, he washes his hands when he would have been gladder to quench the fire in his heart, which still burnt and vexed him. Lastly, when Judas had betrayed and sold Him, and no man made hue and cry after him, his conscience was his pursuer, judge, and executioner, persecuted him out of the world, haunted him, would not suffer him to live, whom otherwise the law of the country would have reprieved, till a natural death had called for him. [Mat. xxvii. 24.] [ver. 3, 4, 5.]

Lastly, even we Christians are not likely to clear ourselves of this bill; it is much to be feared, that if our own hearts are called to witness, our judge will need no farther indictments. It was an heathen speech[x] concerning this rule of our lives and actions, that to study it hard, to reform and repair all obliquities and defects in it, and then *βεβαιοῦν*, to set it up strong and firm as a pillar in our hearts, was the part and office of a philosopher; and then afterwards to make use of it in our whole conversation, this was the part of a virtuous man complete and absolute. And how then will our contempt be aggravated, if Christianity, which Clemens calls spiritual philosophy, and is to be reckoned above all moral perfections, hath yet wrought neither of these effects in us! if we have continued so far from straightening, or setting up, or making use of this rule, that we have not so much as ever enquired or marked whether there be any such thing left within us or no! Theodoret[y] in his second *θεραπ.* is very passionate in the expression of this contempt of the *τὸ νοερὸν φῶς τῆς ἀληθείας*, "the light of truth shining in our understandings." There be a sort of birds, saith he, that fly or move only in the night, called from thence night-birds, and night-ravens, which are afraid of light, as either an enemy to spy, to assault, or betray them; but salute, and court, and make love to darkness as their only queen and mistress of

[x] [Καὶ τὸ φιλοσοφεῖν τοῦτό ἐστιν, ἐπισκέπτεσθαι καὶ βεβαιοῦν τοὺς κανόνας. τὸ δ' ἤδη χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἐγνωσμένοις, τοῦτο τοῦ καλοῦ καὶ ἀγαθοῦ ἔργον ἐστίν. —Arrian. Epicteti Dissertat., lib. ii. c. 11. § 24.]

[y] [Theodoret. Therapeut. ii. p. 58. ed. Gaisf.]

their actions, *ὡς σωτήριον*, as a creature sent on purpose to preserve them; and these, saith he, deserve not to be chid but pitied, for nature at first appointed them this condition of life, *ἀπεκλήρωσεν*, it is their birthright and inheritance, and therefore nobody will be angry with them for living on it; *οἱ δὲ αὐθαιρέτως, κ.τ.λ.*; but for them who were made creatures of light, and, had it not been for their wilfulness, had still continued light in the Lord, who are altogether encompassed and environed with light, light of nature, light of reason, light of religion, nay, the most glorious asterism, or conjunction of lights in the world, the light of the gospel to walk in; for these men merely out of perverseness of wilful hearts, to hate and abjure, and defy this light, to run out of the world almost for fear of it, to be for ever a soliciting and worshipping of darkness, as Socrates was said to adore the clouds[z], this is such a sottishness, that the stupidest element under heaven would naturally scorn to be guilty of; for never was the earth so peevish, as to forbid the sun when it should shine on it, or to slink away, or subduce itself from its rays. And yet this is our case, beloved, who do more amorously, and flatteringly court, and woo, and solicit darkness, than ever the heathens adored the sun. Not to wander out of the sphere my text hath placed me in, to shew how the light of the gospel and Christianity is neglected by us, our guilt will lie heavy enough on us, if we keep us to the light only of natural reason within us. How many sins do we daily commit, which both nature and reason abhor and loathe! How many times do we not only unman, but even uncreature ourselves! Aristotle[a] observes, that that by which any thing is known first, that which doth distinguish one thing from another *a priore*, *ἀρχὴ λέγεται*, is to be called the beginning or cause of that thing; and that the light of reason distinguishing one action from another, being the first thing that teaches me that this is good, that otherwise may from thence be termed the beginning of every reasonable action in us, and then wherever this cause or beginning is left out and wanting, there the thing produced is not so called a positive act, or proper effect, but a defect, an abortion, or still-born frustrate issue; and of this condition in-

[z] [Aristoph. Nubes. v. 253.]

[a] [Aristot. Metaph., Δ. c. 1. ad init.]

deed is every sin in us. Every action where this law within us is neglected, is not truly an action, but a passion, a suffering or a torment of the creature. Thus do we not so much live and walk, which note some action, as lie entranced, asleep, nay, dead in sin; by this perverseness it is perpetual night with us, nay, we even die daily; our whole life is but a multiplied swoon or lethargy, in which we remain stupid, breathless, senseless, till the day of death or judgment with a hideous voice affrights and rouses us, and we find ourselves awake in hell; and so our dark souls having a long while groped wilfully in the sun, are at last led to an everlasting, inevitable darkness, whither the mercy or rays of the sun can never pierce; where it will be no small accession to our torment, to remember and tremble at that light which before we scorned. Thus, I say, do we in a manner uncreature ourselves, and by the contempt of this law of our creation, even frustrate and bring to nothing our creation itself, and this is chiefly by sins of sloth, and stupid, sluggish, unactive vices, which, as I said, make our whole life a continued passion, never daring, or venturing, or attempting to act or do any thing in Church or commonwealth, either toward God or our neighbour; and of such a conditioned man nobody will be so charitable as to guess he hath any soul, or light of reason in him, because he is so far from making use of it, unless it be such a soul as Tully[b] saith a swine hath, which serves it only instead of salt, to keep it from stinking. For it is Aristotle's[c] observation, that every one of the elements, besides the earth, was by some philosopher or other defined to be the soul. Some said the soul was fire, some that it was air, some water, but never any man was so mad, as to maintain the earth to be it, because it was so heavy and unwieldy. So then this heavy, motionless, unactive Christian, this clod of earth, hath, as I said, uncreatured himself, and by contemning this active reason within him, even deprived himself of his soul. Again, how ordinary a thing is it to unman ourselves by this contempt of the directions of reason, by doing things that no man in his right mind would ever have patience to think of!

[b] [Cicero, De Nat. Deorum, lib. ii. c. 64.]
[c] [Aristot. De Anima, lib. i. c. 2.]

Beloved, to pass by those which we call unnatural sins, i. e. so in the highest degree, as too horrid for our nature, set down in the latter end of this chapter, for all Christian ears to glow and tingle at, and I had hoped for all English spirits to abhor and loathe; to pass these, I say, our whole life almost affords minutely sins which would not argue us men, but some other creatures. There be few things we do in our age, which are proper peculiar acts of men; one man gives himself to eating and drinking, and bestows his whole care on that one faculty, which they call the vegetative, growing faculty; and then what difference is there betwixt him and a tree, whose whole nature it is to feed and grow? Certainly unless he hath some better employment, he is at best but *ζωόφυτον*, a plant-animal, whose shape would perhaps persuade you that it hath some sense or soul in it, but its actions betray it to be a mere plant, little better than an artichoke or cabbage; another goes a little higher, yet not far; doth all that his sense presents to him, suffers all that his sensitive faculties lust and rage to exercise at freedom[d]; is as fierce as the tiger, as lustful as the goat, as ravenous as the wolf, and the like; and all the beasts of the field, and fowls of the air, be but several emblems and hieroglyphics concurring to make up his character; carries a wilderness about him, as many sins as the nature of a sensitive creature is capable of; and then who will stick to compare this man to the beasts that perish? For it is Theophilus'[e] note, that the cattle and beasts of the field were created the same day
Gen. i. 25. with man, to note *θηρία τίνων ἀσεβούντων*, the brutish condition of some men, and that therefore the blessing was not bestowed on them, but reserved for the man which should
ver. 26. 28. "have the dominion over them." In sum, every action which reason, or Scripture, or God's Spirit guides not in us, is to be called the work of some other creature of one of these three sorts; either earthly, the work of a plant, or sensual, the work of a brute[f], or thirdly, above the condition of both these, devilish.

[d] [*πῶς δὲ οὐκ ἄλογον πολλοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπ' αἰσθήσει μόνον ζῶντας ὁρῶντας, νοῦν δὲ καὶ λόγον οὐκ ἔχοντας, κ.τ.λ.*—Porphyr., De Abstinentiâ, lib. iii. § 19.]

[e] Theophilus ad Autolyc., lib. ii. [§ 17. p. 361, D.]

[f] Jamblichus, Protrept., p. 145. [Symb. xvi.]

Thus do you see the sin of the contempt of the light of nature, which although it be dimmed in us by our corruption, yet shined so bright in the heathen, that they were left without excuse; in the Jews, that even their own hearts accused them for their rebellions; and in us Christians, that unless we move according to its directions, we are fallen below the condition of men, almost of creatures. It were now superfluous further to demonstrate it, our time will be better spent if we close with some use of it; and that will prove manifold, 1. by way of caution, not to deify, or exalt too high, or trust in this light of nature. It was once a perfect glorious rule, but is now distorted and defaced; it once was light in the Lord, almost an angel of light; it shone as the sun in the firmament, in majesty and full brightness, but is now only as the moon, pale and dim, scarce able to do us any service, unless it borrows some rays from the Sun of Righteousness. The fall hath done somewhat with it, I know not what to call it, either much impaired it and diminished its light in its essence, or else much encumbered or oppressed it in its operations, as a candle under a veil, or lantern, which, though it burn and shine as truly as on a candlestick, yet doth not so much service in enlightening the room; the soul within us is much changed, either is not in its essence so perfect, and active, and bright, as once it was; or else being infused in a sufficient perfection, is yet terribly overcast with a gloom and cloud of corruptions, that it can scarce find any passage to get through, and shew itself in our actions; for the "corruptible body presseth down the soul," &c. And from this caution grow many lower branches, whence we may gather some fruit; as in the second place, infinitely to humble ourselves before God for the first sin of Adam, which brought this darkness on our souls, and account it not the meanest or slightest of our miseries, that our whole nature is defiled, and bruised, and weakened; to aggravate every circumstance and effect of that sin against thyself, which has so liberally afforded fuel to the flames of lust, of rage, and wild desire, and thereby, without God's gracious mercy, to the flames of hell. This is a most profitable point, yet little thought on; and therefore would deserve a whole sermon to discuss to you. Thirdly, to observe and acknowledge the necessity of some brighter

Wisd. x. 15.

light than this of nature can afford us, and with all the care and vigilancy of our hearts, all the means that Scripture will lend us, and at last with all the importunities and groans, and violence of our souls, to petition and solicit, and urge God's illuminating Spirit to break out and shine on us. To undertake to interpret any ancient author, requires, say the grammarians, a man of deep and various knowledge, because there may be some passage or other in that book, which will refer to every sort of learning in the world, whence it is observed that the old scholiasts and ἐξηγηταὶ, were most exquisite scholars. Thus, certainly, will not any ordinary skill serve turn to interpret and explain many dark sayings, which were at first written in the book of our hearts, but are now almost past reading; only that omniscient Spirit, that hath no shadow of ignorance, the finger that first writ, must be beseeched to read and point out the riddle. We must make use of that rotten staff of nature, as far as its strength will bear, and that very gingerly too, never daring to lean or lay our whole weight upon it, lest it either wound with its splinter, or else break under us; our help and stay, and subsistence, and trust must be in the Lord, our eyes must wait on His enlightening Spirit, and never lose a ray that falls from it. Fourthly, to clear up as much as we can, and re-enliven this light within us; and that, first,

By stirring up and blowing, and so nourishing every spark we find within us. The least particle of fire left in a coal, may by pains be improved into a flame; it is held possible to restore, or at least preserve for a time any thing that is not quite departed. If thou findest but a spark of religion in thee, which saith, a God is to be worshipped; care, and sedulity, and the breath of prayers may in time by this inflame the whole man into a bright fire of zeal towards God. In brief, whatever thou doest, let not any the least atom of that fire, which thou once feelest within thee, ever go out; quench not the weakest motion, or inclination even of reason towards God or goodness; how unpolished soever this diamond be, yet if it do but glisten, it is too precious to be cast away. And then, secondly,

By removing all hinderances or encumbrances that may any way weaken or oppress it, and these you have learnt to be corrupt

affections. That democracy, and crowd, and press, and common people of the soul, raises a tumult in every street within us, that no voice of law or reason can be heard. If you will but disgorge and purge the stomach, which hath been thus long oppressed, if you will but remove this cloud of crudities, then will the brain be able to send some rays down to the heart, which till then are sure to be caught up by the way, anticipated, and devoured. For the naked simplicity of the soul, the absence of all disordered passions, is that οἰκεία εὐεξία τῆς ψυχῆς, saith Aphrodiseus[g], that kindly, familiar, good temper of the soul, by which it is able to find out and judge of truth. In brief, if thou canst crop thy luxuriant passions, if thou canst either expel or tame all the wild beasts within thee, which are born to devour any thing which is weak or innocent, then will that mild voice within thee, in the cave, take heart and shew itself. In the mean time this hurry of thy senses drowns that reason, and thou canst not hope to see, as long as like old Tobit, the dung and white film doth remain upon thine eyes. If thou canst use any means to dissolve this dung of affections, which an habit of sin hath baked within thee, the scales will fall off from thine eyes, and the blind Tobit shall be restored to his sight. In brief, do but fortify thy reasonable soul against all the undermining, and faction, and violence of these sensual passions, do but either depose, or put to the sword that atheistical tyrant and usurper, as Jamblichus calls the affections, do but set reason in the chair, and hear and observe his dictates, and thou hast disburthened thyself of a great company of weights and pressures; thou wilt be able to look more like a man, to hold thy head more courageously, and bend thy thoughts more resolutely toward heaven; and I shall expect, and hope, and pray, and almost be confident that if thou dost perform sincerely what thy own soul prompts thee to, God's Spirit is nigh at hand to perfect, and crown, and seal thee up to the day of redemption.

In the next place, thou mayst see thine own guilts the clearer, call thyself to an account even of those things which thou thinkest thou art freest from; that which the Apostle in this chapter and part of my discourse hath charged the

[g] [Cf. Alex. Aphrodis. in Aristot. Top., lib. i. f. 17. Ald.]

heathens with; and if thou lookest narrowly I am afraid thou wilt spy thine own picture in that glass, and find thyself in many things as arrant a Gentile as any of them. For any sincere care of God, or religion, how few of us are there that ever entertained so unpleasant a guest in their hearts; we go to church, and so did they to their temples; we pray, and they sacrificed; they washed and bathed themselves before they durst approach their deities, and we come in our best clothes and cleanest linen; but for any further real service we mean towards God there, for any inward purity of the heart, for any sincere worship of our soul, we are as guiltless, as free from it, we do as much contemn and scorn it, as ever did any heathen. Again, what man of us is not in some kind guilty even of their highest crime, idolatry? Some of them took the brain to be sacred, ἐγκέφαλος ἱερὸς, saith Athenæus[h]; and therefore hearing some cry God help when one sneezed, the ignorant sort worshipped that noise as an expression of a deity in the brain; and so, as senselessly, many of us deify our own brains, and adore every thing that ever comes out of them. Every conceit of ours must be like the birth of Jupiter's brain, a Minerva at least; be we never so ignorant or mechanical, every device, every fancy of our own—especially in matters of religion—is straight of divine authority; and having resolved ourselves the children of God, every crotchet we fall upon must be necessarily *theopneust*, and inspired, and others accused for irreligious, or singular, that will not as soon give homage to it. In sum, every imagination becomes an image, and the artificer deifies his own handiwork, forgetting that he made it, as it is described in the thirteenth of Wisdom toward the end; and this is one kind of idolatry. Again, who is there that hath not some pleasure in his heart which takes place of God there? They had their sun and moon, most glorious creatures, their heroes, whose virtues had even deified their memory, and silly men they admired and could not choose but worship. The devil, and a humour of superstition customary in them, feed and bribed the law in their hearts to hold its peace, and not recall them. But how basely have we outgone their vilest worships! How have we outstript them! Let but one appearance of gain, like that

Wisd. xiii. 17, sq.

[h] [Athenæus, lib. ii. § 72. p. 66. ed. Casaub.]

golden calf of the Israelites; a beautiful woman, like that Venus of the heathens; nay, in brief, whatever image or representation of delight thy own lusts can propose thee, let it but glance, or glide by thee, and *Quis non incurvavit?* Shew me a man that hath not at some time or other fallen down and worshipped. In sum, all the lower part of the soul or carnal affections are but a picture of the city of Athens, "wholly given to idolatry." The basest, unworthiest pleasure or content in the world, that which is good for nothing else, the very refuse of the refuse, is become an idol, and hath its shrines in some heart or other; and we crouch and bow, and sacrifice to it, and all this against the voice of our soul, and nature within us, if we would suffer it to speak aloud, or but hearken to its whisperings; *φύσεως γὰρ τροφὴ, ἐπιθυμίας ἡδονὴ*, saith Philoponus[i], Nature only bids us feed ourselves with sufficient, lust brought in superfluity and pleasure. But this only by the way, lest you might think that part of my sermon concerning the heathens' contempt of this law, did belong little to you, and so might have been spared.

Acts xvii. 16.

Wisd. xiii. 13.

Lastly, not to lade every part of my former discourse with its several use, or application, take but this one more. If this light shines but dimly within us, then let us so much the more not dare contemn it. That master that speaks but seldom, then surely deserves to be obeyed; he that is slow in his reproofs, certainly hath good reason when he falls foul with any body. If Crœsus' dumb son in Herodotus[k], seeing one come to kill his father, shall by violence break the string of his tongue that formerly hindered his speech, and he that never spake before roar out an *ἄνθρωπε, μὴ κτεῖνε Κροῖσον*, "Sir, kill not Crœsus," I wonder not that the Persian held his hand; a very barbarian would be amazed and stopped by such a prodigy; it must needs be an odious thing when the child which can scarce speak expresses indignation. Wherefore if ever our bestial soul, that of our sense, shall seduce us to any thing that our manly soul, that of our reason, which is now somewhat decrepit, and dim-sighted, shall yet espy and find fault with; if in any enterprise this natural law within us shall give the check, let us suddenly remove our project, and not dare to reject such fatherly, sage admonish-

[i] [Philoponus, in Aristot. de Anima, f. 4.]

[k] [Herod., lib. i. c. 85.]

ments; if all the means in the world can help to avoid it, let us never fall into the snare. And if at thy audit with thy own soul, and examination of thyself, amongst the root of thy customary ignorant sins,—and, O Lord deliver me from my secret faults—if in that heap and chaos, thy own heart can pick out many of this nature, and present them to thee, which it before forewarned thee of; then let the saltest, most briny tear in thy heart be called out to wash off this guilt; let the saddest, mortified thought thou canst strain for, be accounted but a poor unproportionable expiation. Think of this seriously, and if all this will nothing move you, I cannot hope that any farther rhetoric, if I had it to spare, would do any good upon you. Only I will try one suasory more, which being somewhat rough may chance to frighten you, and that is, the punishment that here expects this contempt, and that a dismal hideous one, all the wild savage devourers in the wilderness, vile affections, which punishment together with the inflicter and manner of inflicting it, are the last parts of my discourse, of which together in a word; "God gave them up to vile affections."

A punishment indeed; and all the fiends of hell could not invent or wish a man a greater; there is not a more certain presage of a *πανωλεθρία*, or total subversion of body and soul, not a more desperate prognostic in the world. It is observed in Photius[1], as a sure token that Jerusalem should be destroyed, because punishment came upon it in a chain, every link drew on another, no intermission or discontinuance of judgments, *τῷ γὰρ λιμῷ ὁ λοιμὸς*, *κ.τ.λ.* A single judgment that brings no train after it is cheaply entertained, and is therefore called not a calamity, but a visitation; but when one plague shall invade, shall supplant another; when the pestilence shall fright out the famine, and the sword pursue the pestilence, that neither may slay all, but each join in the glory of the spoil; then must the beholder acknowledge *θεομηνίας ἔργον*, that God is resolved to make them the scene of His rage, not only of His wrath. Thus also in the spiritual *κρίσις* of the estate of the soul, some sins may [Judg. i.] be suffered to invade us, and stick as did the Amorites, to goad our sides, not destroy but humble us. But when sins

[1] [Photius in Biblioth., p. 36. ed. Hæschel.]

shall come like gaol birds linked and chained together, when our corruptions and insolent tyrannical passions shall make us contemn the light and law of reason and nature; when that contempt shall bring forth idolatry, and the like, either worship of idol gods, or vain conceits, or imaginary delights, every lust of our baser soul; then can it not be expected that God will have so little to do, as to take any more care of us, that He will have so much mercy as even to punish us any longer. The next voice that we can expect is that horrible mercy of His, "Why should you be smitten any more?" Isaiah i. 5. Any restraint either of chastisement or instruction would be scarce seen upon us, and therefore it is but lost labour to beat the air, or to lay stripes upon the sea with Xerxes [m]. The height of God's wrath in this world is but our just reward, and that is desertion, or dereliction, and giving us over, and giving us up, which will suddenly bring us to that which our corrupt nature posts after, all vile affections.

The issue of all is this; that those that contemn God's ordinary restraints, God ordinarily leaves to themselves, and suffers them to run into most horrible sins. It is justice that they which delight in error, should be let alone in their course, that they may see and acknowledge the error of their delight, that they which have contemned God's voice, and nature's within them, should be forsaken and left without either, ungodly, unnatural; that they which lulled their reasonable soul into a lethargy, for fear it should awake them, or disturb their delights, should not have life enough without it, ever to awake or rouse themselves or it; that they which have maliciously, and contemptuously put out the sun, should for ever suffer a continued night. It is Hippocrates'[n] observation that the Africans are very libidinous; they are neither hardy nor valiant, nor laborious, ἀλλὰ κρατέειν τὴν ἡδονὴν, lust hath so effeminated them, that they are fit for nothing but for softness; and therefore, saith he, πολύμορφα γίνεται τὰ ἐν τοῖς θηρίοις, there be among them beasts of all sorts of strange shapes, the heat and violence of the same lust makes the very beasts unnatural, the confusion of species is ordinary among them;

[m] [Herod., lib. vii. c. 45.]

[n] [Hippocrates De aqua, aere et locis, tom. i. p. 349. Med. Græc., tom. xxi. ed. Kühn.]

and so almost every birth a monster; nature is almost lost among them, and many beasts may be found in Africa, which never had any of their kind in the ark; *Africa semper aliquod apportat novi*, whosoever hath a mind to a strange sight, there he shall have store of them. Thus is it in the soul, if the upper, the manly part of it be overswelled with lust, it straight becomes effeminate, and enervate, hath neither strength, nor sinews, nor courage for any undertaking; and then the beasts of the field, the lower, baser, sensual faculties of the soul are not only lusty, but outrageous; having no keeper to govern them, they become wild; scorn any limits, or bounds of nature, do every day conceive horrid, unnatural, vile imaginations, and every season grow big, and bring forth monsters,—monstrous oaths, monstrous delights, monstrous vanities. Some new art or trick of sinning that was never heard of before, is invented against every solemn season of our jollity, and this we carry about, and shew, and brag of as a new creature, or strange sight, and get a great deal of applause, and admiration, and perhaps some money by the employment. It were too long to point out the several sorts of these vile affections, which contempt of this light hath produced in every one of us; only let us strive and strain, and stretch the eyes that are left us to examine, and observe every degree and symptom, and prognostic of them in ourselves, and never leave poring till we have pierced through that carnal security that blinded us, and fully humble ourselves in a sense of that desperate estate, and almost the hell that we are fallen blindfold into. And if we are still blinded, still unable to see, or move, or relieve ourselves, let us then lay hold of the next post or pillar we meet with, and there fix, and dwell, and weep, and pray to that omnipotent Physician of our souls, that restorer of reasonable creatures, that He will by some spiritual eye-water recover us to that sense. It is impossible, saith Jobius[o],

[o] [. . . οὐδὲν ἕτερον διαλαμβάνει, ἢ ὅτι τῶν πρεπωδεστάτων ἦν, τὴν ἀπαράλλακτον καὶ φυσικὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμᾶς τοὺς κατ' εἰκόνα μὲν γεγονότας, τὴν δὲ χαρακτῆρα κιβδηλεύσαντας, ταύτην ἡμᾶς ἀποκαθᾶραί τε τῶν κηλιδωμάτων, καὶ εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον κάλλος ἀναμορφώσασθαι· καὶ ὡς ἔδει τὸν ἀληθῆ καὶ ἐνυπόστατον τοῦ θεοῦ σοφίαν τοὺς εἰς ἀλογίαν παρατραπέντας καὶ πρὸς τὸν κτηνώδη βίον ἀπονεύσαντας, ἀπάλλαξαί τε τῆς ἀλογίας, καὶ πρὸς τὸ νοερὸν ἐπαναγαγεῖν ἀξίωμα.—Photius Biblioth., p. 601. ed. Hoeschel.]

for any one to restore us to the image of the Father, which was once on us, but Him only who was the eternal image of the Father, He only could *ἀπάλλαξαι τὴς ἀλογίας, καὶ πρὸς τὸ νοερὸν ἐπαναγαγεῖν ἀξίωμα*, turn out that unreasonable blind soul within us, made up of our sins which move us, and reduce us to the dignity of reasonable creatures. He hath already by His incarnation, delivered us from one long night, the dark gloom of our heathen ancestors; O that He would be born again spiritually in our souls, to deliver us from other more Cimmerian darkness, the night and hell of habituate sin, wherein we grope! He once breathed on us the breath of life to make us men; O that He would again but breathe on us the *τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα*, His holy breath, His hallowing breath, His breath of holiness to make us saints! It is He that must prevent us with His Spirit, or else we run headlong into all vile affections.

O that He would but sanctify us! and then the most plausible flattering sin in the world, nay, the most boisterous, impetuous lust, should not be able to tyrannize over us. In the meantime, let us remain men till it shall please that free voice to call us into saints. Grace is never placed but in a reasonable creature; and is therefore said to be sent to make reason see, what by nature only it cannot, never to blemish it in what it can comprehend, as the learned bishop hath observed against the Jesuit. Let us make much of all the light that nature and reason will afford us, let us not suffer one precious ray to be cast away upon us, but improve it to the extent of its virtue, for the direction of our lives. And whensoever this light shall fail, that it cannot guide us, or our eyes dazzle that we cannot follow, let us pray to the Father of lights, and God of spirits, that He will shine spiritually in our hearts, and fulfil us with His light of grace here, which may enable us to behold Him, and enjoy Him, and rejoice with Him, and be satisfied with that eternal light of His glory hereafter.

Now to Him which hath elected us, hath created, redeemed, &c.

SERMON XXVII.

Gal. vi. 15.

But a new creature.

Amongst all other encumbrances, and delays in our way to heaven, there is no one that doth so clog and trash, so disadvantage and backward us, and in fine, so cast us behind in our race, as a contentedness in a formal worship of God, an acquiescence and resting satisfied in outward performances, when men upon a confidence that they perform all that can be required of a Christian, they look no further than the outward work, observe not what heart is under this outside, but resolve their estate is safe, they have as much interest in heaven as any one. Such men as these the Apostle begins to character and censure in the twelfth verse
Gal. vi. 12. of the chapter, "As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh," &c. They that stand only on a fair specious outside, and think all the sap and life of religion lies in the bark, they do this and this; these will have you circumcised, and constrain you to a many burthensome ceremonies; measuring out religion to you by the weight, thus much is required of you to do (as popish confessors set their deluded votaries their task of Ave Maries and Pater nosters by tale) and thus you may be sure to be saved. In brief, the Apostle here shews the unprofitableness of all these, and sets up the inward sanctity and renewedness of heart against them all, as the only thing that will stand us in stead, and appear to be of any weight in the balance of the sanctuary. If you observe all the commands, and submit yourselves to all the burden of both law and gospel, and bear it upon your shoulders never so valiantly; if you be content to be cir-

cumcised as Christ was, or because He hath now abrogated that, make use of Christian liberty, and remain uncircumcised, notwithstanding all inducements to the contrary; in brief, be you outwardly never so severe a Jew or Christian, all that is nothing worth, there is but one thing most peremptorily required of you, and that you have omitted; "For neither circumcision availeth any thing, neither uncircumcision, but a new creature."

The particle 'but' in the front of my text is exclusive and restrictive, it excludes every thing in the world from pretending to avail any thing, from being believed to do us any good. For by circumcision the Church of the Jews, and by uncircumcision the whole profession of Christian religion being understood, when he saith neither of these availeth any thing, he forcibly implies that all other means, all professions, all observances that men think or hope to get heaven by, are to no purpose, and that by consequence it exactly restrains to the new creature; there it is to be had, and nowhere else; thus doth he slight and undervalue, and even reprobate all other ways to heaven, that he may set the richer price, and raise a greater estimation in us of this. The substance of all the Apostle's discourse, and the groundwork of mine shall be this one aphorism, nothing is efficaciously available to salvation, but a renewed, regenerated heart. For the opening of which we will examine by way of doctrine, wherein this new creature consists, and then by way of use, the necessity of that, and unprofitableness of all other plausible pretending means; and first of the first, wherein this new creature consists.

It is observable, that our state of nature and sin is in Scripture expressed ordinarily by old age, the natural sinful man, that is, all our natural affections that are born and grow up with us, are called the old man, as if since Adam's fall we were decrepit, and feeble, and aged as soon as born, as a child begotten by a man in a consumption never comes to the strength of a man, is always weak, and crazy, and puling, hath all the imperfections and corporal infirmities of age before he is out of his infancy. And according to this ground the whole analogy of Scripture runs; all that is opposite to the old decrepit state, to the dotage of nature, is

Rom. vi. 6; Col. iii. 9; Eph. iv. 22.

Mark i. 27; xvi. 17; John xiii. 34; Eph. ii. 15; 2 Cor. v. 17.

phrased new; "the new covenant;" the language of believers; "new tongues;" "a new commandment;" "a new man." In sum, the state of grace is expressed by *πάντα καινὰ*, "all is become new." So that old and new, as it divides the Bible, the whole state of things, the world; so it doth that to which all these serve, man; every natural man which hath nothing but nature in him, is an old man, be he never so young, is full of years, even before he is able to tell them. Adam was a perfect man when he was but a minute old, and all his

Eph. ii. 5.

children are old even in the cradle, nay, even dead with old age. And then consequently, every spiritual man which hath somewhat else in him than he received from Adam, he that

John iii. 3.

is "born from above," *γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν*, (for it may be so rendered from the original, as well as born again, as our English read it,) he that is by God's Spirit quickened from

Eph. ii. 5.

the old death, he is contrary to the former, a new man, a new creature; the old eagle hath cast his beak and is grown young; the man, when old, has "entered the second time into his mother's womb, and is born again," all the gray hairs and wrinkles fall off from him, as the scales

[Tobit xi. 13.]

from blind Tobit's eyes, and he comes forth a refined, glorious, beauteous new creature, you would wonder to see the change. So that you find in general, that the Scripture presumes it, that there is a renovation, a casting away of the old coat, a youth and spring again in many men from the old age and weak bed-rid estate of nature. Now that you may conceive wherein it consists, how this new man is brought forth in us, by whom it is conceived, and in what womb it is carried, I will require no more of you, than to observe and understand with me what is meant by the ordinary phrase in our divines, a new principle, or inward principle of life, and that you shall do briefly thus. A man's body is naturally a sluggish, unactive, motionless, heavy thing, not able to stir or move the least animal motion, without a soul to enliven it; without that it is but a carcass, as you see at death; when the soul is separated from it, it returns to be but a stock or lump of flesh; the soul bestows all life and motion on it, and enables it to perform any work of nature. Again, the body and soul together considered in relation to somewhat above their

power and activity, are as impotent and motionless, as before the body without the soul. Set a man to remove a mountain, and he will heave perhaps to obey your command, but in event will do no more towards the displacing of it, than a stone in the street could do; but now let an omnipotent power be annexed to this man, let a supernatural spirit be joined to this soul, and then will it be able to overcome the proudest, stoutest difficulty in nature. You have heard in the primitive Church of a grain of faith removing mountains, and believe me, all miracles are not yet out-dated. The work of regeneration, the bestowing of a spiritual life on one "dead in trespasses and sins," the making of a carcass walk, the natural old man to spring again, and move spiritually, is as great a miracle as that. Now the soul, in that it produces life and motion, the exercise of life in the body, is called a principle, that is, a spring or fountain of life, because all comes from it; in like manner, that which moves this soul, and enables it to do that which naturally it could not; that which gives it a new life, which before it lived not, furnisheth it with spiritual powers to quell and subdue all carnal affections which were before too hard for it; this, I say, is called properly an inward principle; and an inward, because it is inwardly and secretly infused, doth not only outwardly assist us as an auxiliary at a dead lift, but is sown and planted in our hearts, as a soul to the soul, to elevate and enable it above itself, hath its seat and palace in the regenerate heart, and there exercises dominion, executes judgment, and that is commonly either by prison or banishment, it either fetters, or else expels all insolent rebellious lusts. Now the new principle, by which not the man, but the new man, the Christian, lives, is, in a word, the Spirit of God, which unites itself to the regenerate heart, so that now he is said to be a godly man, a spiritual man from the God, from the Spirit, as before a living reasonable man from the soul, from the reason that informed and ruled in him; which is noted by that distinction in Scripture betwixt the regenerate and unregenerate, expressed by a natural or animal, and a spiritual man. Those creatures that have no soul in them are called naturals, having nothing but nature within to move them; others which have a soul, animals, or living

creatures, by both which the unregenerate is signified indifferently, because the soul which he hath stands him in little stead, his flesh rules all, and then he is also called a carnal man, for all his soul he is but a lump of flesh, and therefore, whether you say he hath a soul, and so call him an animal, or hath not a soul, and so call him a mere natural, there is no great difference in it. But now the regenerate man which hath more than a soul, God's Spirit to enliven him, he is of another rank, πνευματικὸς, a spiritual man, nay, only he properly a Christian, because he lives by
Gal. ii. 20. Christ, he lives, yet not he, but Christ liveth in him. This being premised, that now you know what this new creature is, he that lives and moves by a new principle, all that is behind will be clearliest presented to you by resolving these four questions; 1. whence it comes; 2. where it lodges; 3. when it enters; 4. what works it performs there.

To the first, whence it comes, the answer is clear and punc-
John iii. 3. tual, ἄνωθεν, from above, from whence comes every good, and
Jam. i. 17. especially "every perfect gift," but this most peculiarly by a several and more excellent way than any thing else. Since Christ's ascension the Holy Ghost of all the Persons in the Trinity is most frequently employed in the work of descending from heaven, and that by way of mission from the Father
John xv. 26. and the Son, according to the promise of Christ, "The Comforter, whom I will send from the Father." Now this Spirit being present every where in its essence, is said to come to us by communication of His gifts, and so to be peculiarly resident in us, as God is in the Church, from which analogy
1 Cor. vi. 19. our bodies are called the "temples of the Holy Ghost which is in us." God sends then His Spirit into our hearts; and this, I said, by a peculiar manner, not by way of emission, as an arrow sent out of a bow, which loses its union which it had with the bow, and is now fastened in the butt or white; nor properly by way of infusion, as the soul is in the body, infused from God, yet so also, that it is in a manner put into our hands, and is so in the man's possession that hath it, that it is neither in any man's else, nor yet by any extraordinary tie annexed to God from whom it came; but by way of irradiation, as a beam sent from the sun, that is in the air indeed, and that substantially, yet so as it is not separated

from the sun, nay, consists only in this, that it is united to the sun; so that if it were possible for it to be cut off from the sun, it would desist to be, it would illuminate no longer. So that you must conceive these beams of God's Spirit at the same time in the Christian's heart and in the Spirit, and so uniting that Spirit to the heart, as you may conceive by this proportion. I have a javelin or spear in my hand; if I would mischief any thing, or drive it from me, I dart it out of my hand at it, from which God's judgments are compared to shooting and lightning, "He hath bent His bow, He hath sent forth His arrows, He cast forth lightnings." But if I like any thing that I meet with, if I would have it to me, I reach out my spear and fasten in it, but still hold the spear in my hand, and having pierced it draw it to me. Thus doth God reach forth His graces to us, and as I may so say, by keeping one end in His hand, and fastening the other in us, plucks and unites us to Himself, from which regeneration is ordinarily called an union with Christ, and this union by a strong able band, *διὰ μείζονος καὶ κυριωτέρου δέσμου*, in Eusebius' phrase, which no man can cut asunder. It is impossible to divide or cut a spirit, and this bond is *δέσμος πνευματικὸς*, a spiritual one, and that made St. Paul so confident, that no creature should ever separate him. And this God does by way of emanation, as a loadstone sending out its effluvia or magnetic atoms draws the iron to itself, which never stays till it be united. Thus do you see from whence this principle comes to me, and in what manner, from God's Spirit by this means uniting me to Himself.

Ps. xviii. 14.

Rom. viii. 39.

To the second question, where it lodges, my answer is, in the heart of man, in the whole soul; not in the understanding, not in the will—a distinction of faculties invented by philosophers to puzzle and perplex divines, and put them to needless shifts—but, I say, in the whole soul, ruling and guiding it in all its actions, enabling it to understand and will spiritually; conceived, I say, and born in the soul, but nursed, and fed, and increased into a perfect stature by the outward organs and actions of the body, for by them it begins to express and shew itself in the world, by them the habit is exerted and made perfect, the seed shot up into an ear, the spring improved to autumn, when the tongue dis-

courses, the hands act, the feet run the way of God's commandments. So, I say, the soul is the mother, and the operations of soul and body, the nurse of this spirit in us, and then who can hold in his spirit without stifling, from breaking out into that joyful acclamation, "Blessed is the womb that bears this incarnate Spirit, and the paps that give Him suck!" Now this inward principle, this grace of regeneration, though it be seated in the whole soul, as it is an habit, yet as it is an operative habit producing, or rather enabling the man to produce several gracious works, so it is peculiarly in every part, and accordingly receives divers names according to several exercises of its power in those several parts. As the soul of man sees in the eye, hears in the ear, understands in the brain, chooses and desires in the heart, and being but one soul, yet works in every room, every shop of the body in a several trade, as it were, and is accordingly called a seeing, a hearing, a willing or understanding soul; thus doth the habit of grace seated in the whole, express and evidence itself peculiarly in every act of it, and is called by as several names as the reasonable soul hath distinct acts or objects. In the understanding, it is, first, spiritual wisdom and discretion in holy things, opposite to which is *νοῦς ἀδόκιμος*, an unapproving, as well as unapproved or reprobate mind, and frequently in Scripture, spiritual blindness. Then as a branch of this, it is belief or assent to the truth of the promises, and the like; in the practical judgment it is spiritual prudence in ordering all our holy knowledge to holy practice; in the will it is a regular choice of whatsoever may prove available to salvation, a holy love of the end, and embracing of the means with courage and zeal. Lastly, in the outward man it is an ordering of all our actions to a blessed conformity with a sanctified soul. In brief, it is one principle within us doth every thing that is holy, believes, repents, hopes, loves, obeys, and what not? And consequently, is effectually in every part of body and soul, sanctifying it to work spiritually, as an holy instrument of a divine invisible cause, that is, the Holy Ghost that is in us and throughout us.

Luke xi. 27.

Rom. i. 28.

For the third question, when this new principle enters; first, you are to know that it comes into the heart in a threefold condition; 1. as an harbinger; 2. as a private secret

guest; 3. as an inhabitant or housekeeper. As it is an harbinger, so it comes to fit and prepare us for itself; trims up, and sweeps, and sweetens the soul, that it may be readier to entertain Him when He comes to reside; and that He doth —as the ancient gladiators had their *arma prælusoria*—by skirmishing with our corruptions before He comes to give them a pitch battle; He brandishes a flaming sword about our ears, and as by a flash of lightning, gives us a sense of a dismal hideous state; and so somewhat restrains us from excess and fury; first, by a momentary remorse, then by a more lasting, yet not purifying flame, the spirit of bondage. In sum, every check of conscience, every sigh for sin, every fear of judgment, every desire of grace, every motion or inclination toward spiritual good, be it never so short-winded, is *præludium Spiritus*, a kind of John Baptist to Christ, something that God sent before to prepare the ways of the Lord. And thus the Spirit comes very often, in every affliction, every disease—which is part of God's discipline to keep us in some order—in brief, at every sermon that works upon us at the hearing; then I say, the lightning flashes in our eyes, we have a glimpse of His Spirit, but cannot come to a full sight of it; and thus He appears to many, whom He will never dwell with. Unhappy men, that they cannot lay hold on Him when He comes so near them! and yet somewhat more happy than they that never came within ken of Him; stopped their ears when He spake to them even at this distance. Every man in the Christian Church hath frequently in his life a power to partake of God's ordinary preparing graces; and it is some degree of obedience, though no work of regeneration, to make good use of them; and if he without the inhabitance of the Spirit cannot make such use as he should, yet to make the best he can; and thus, I say, the Spirit appears to the unregenerate almost every day of our lives. 2. When this Spirit comes a guest to lodge with us, then is He said to enter; but till by actions and frequent obliging works He makes Himself known to His neighbours, as long as He keeps His chamber, till He declare Himself to be there, so long He remains a private secret guest; and that is called the introduction of the form, that makes a man to be truly regenerate, when the seed is sown in his heart, when the habit is

infused; and that is done sometimes discernibly, sometimes not discernibly, but seldom, as when Saul was called in the
Acts ix. midst of his madness, he was certainly able to tell a man the very minute of his change, of his being made a new creature. Thus they which have long lived in an enormous antichristian course, do many times find themselves stricken on a sudden, and are able to date their regeneration, and tell you punctually how old they are in the Spirit. Yet because there be many preparations to this Spirit, which are not this Spirit; many presumptions in our hearts false-grounded, many tremblings and jealousies in those that have it, great affinity between faith natural and spiritual; seeing it is a spirit that
[Acts ii. 3.] thus enters, and not as it did light on the disciples in a bodily shape, it is not an easy matter for any one to define the time of his conversion. Some may guess somewhat nearer than others, as remembering a sensible change in themselves; but in a word, the surest discerning of it, is in its working, not at its entering. I may know that now I have the Spirit better than at what time I came to it. Undiscernibly God's supernatural agency interposes sometimes in the mother's
Luke i. 41. womb, as in John Baptist springing in Elizabeth at Mary's
Jer. i. 5. salutation, and perhaps in Jeremiah, "Before thou camest
Isa. xlix. 5. out of the womb I sanctified thee," and in Isaiah, "The Lord that formed me from the womb to be His servant." But this divine address attends most ordinarily till the time of our baptism, when the Spirit accompanying the outward sign infuses itself into their hearts, and there seats and plants itself, and grows up with the reasonable soul, keeping even their most luxuriant years within bounds; and as they come to an use of their reason, to a more and more multiplying this habit of grace into holy spiritual acts of faith and obedience; from which it is ordinarily said, that infants baptized have habitual faith, as they may be also said to have habitual repentance, and the habits of all other graces, because they have the root and seed of those beauteous healthful flowers which will actually flourish then, when they come to years. And this, I say, is so frequent to be performed at baptism, that ordinarily it is not wrought without that means, and in those means we may expect it, as our Church doth in our Liturgies, where she presumes at every baptism that "it hath

pleased God to regenerate the infant by His Holy Spirit." And this may prove a solemn piece of comfort to some who suspect their state more than they need; and think it is impossible that they should be in a regenerate condition, because they have not as yet found any such notable change in themselves, as they see and observe in others. These men may as well be jealous they are not men, because they cannot remember when their soul came to them; if they can find the effects of spiritual life in themselves, let them call it what they will, a religious education, or a custom of well-doing, or an unacquaintedness with sin; let them comfort themselves in their estate, and be thankful to God who visited them thus betimes; let it never trouble them that they were not once as bad as other men, but rather acknowledge God's mercy, who hath prevented such a change, and by uniting them to Him in the cradle, hath educated, and nursed them up in familiarity with the Spirit.

Lastly, the Spirit sometimes enters into our hearts upon occasional emergencies, the sense of God's judgments on ourselves or others, the reflection on His mercies, the reading good books, falling into virtuous acquaintance, but most eminently at, and with the preaching of the Word; and this by degrees as it seems to us; but indeed at some one especial season or other, which yet perhaps we are not able to discern, and here indeed are we ordinarily to expect this guest if we have not yet found Him; here doth it love to be cherished, and refreshed, and warmed within us, if we have it, "for even it is the power of God unto salvation." Rom. i. 16. The third condition in which this Spirit comes into our hearts, is as an inhabitant or housekeeper. "The Spirit," saith Austin [a], "first is in us, then dwells in us; before it dwells, it helps us to believe; when it dwells, it helps, and perfects, and improves our faith, and accomplishes it with all other concomitant graces." So, I say here, the Spirit is then said to inhabit, and keep house in us, not as soon as it is entertained and received, but when it breaks forth into acts, and declares itself before all men, "when men see our good works, and glorify our Father." Mat. v. 16. Before we were said to "live in the Spirit," now to walk, as Gal. v. 25. you shall see the phrases used distinctly. To walk, that is,

[a] S. Aug. Epist. cv. ad Xystum. [epist. cxciv. § 18. tom. ii. p. 720. ed. Ben.]

to go about conspicuously in the sight of all men, breaking forth into works—as the sun after the dispersions of a mist or cloud—whereby all men see and acknowledge his faith and obedience, and find their own evil ways reprehended and made manifest by his good, as is noted in the 13th verse,
Eph. v. 13. "All things that are reproved, are made manifest by the light." Semblable to which is that of the atheists' repining
Wisd. ii. 14. at the godly man, "He is made to reprove our thoughts." Thus is the third query resolved also, when this inward principle enters. 1. It comes as an harbinger, in every outward restraint by which God keeps us from sinning. 2. It enters as a guest in some season or other, once for all. In the womb, at baptism, at some sermon, sometimes at a notable tempest, shaking and stirring us violently, ordinarily and for the most part not to be discerned by us; and lastly, it comes and dwells with us, and shews itself in its works, yet that not at any set time after His entrance, not constantly without ever covering His face, but when and as often as He pleases, and the flesh resisteth not.

To the last query, what works it performs, the answer shall be brief; every thing that may be called spiritual, faith, repentance, charity, hope, self-denial, and the rest; but these not promiscuously, or in a heap altogether, but by a wise dispensation, in time and by degrees. The soul being enabled by this inward principle, is equally disposed to the producing of all these, and as occasions do occur, doth actually perform and produce them; so that in my conceit that question concerning the priority of repentance, or faith, is not either of such moment, or difficulty, as is by some disputers pretended. The seeds of them both are at one time planted in the soul; and then there is no faith in any subject, but there is repentance also; nor repentance
Heb. xi. 6. without faith. So that where it is said, "without faith it is impossible to please God" in any thing else, it is true; but argues no necessary precedence of it before other graces, for the habits of them all are of the same age in us, and then also will it be as true, that without repentance, or without love, faith itself cannot please God; for if it be truly acceptable faith, there is both repentance and love in the same womb to keep it company. Thus are we wont to say that only faith justifieth, but not faith alone; and the reason

these promises in Scripture are made sometimes to one grace precisely, sometimes to another, is because they are all at once rooted in the man, and in their habits chained together inseparably. Faith saves every man that hath it, and yet the believingest man under heaven shall not be saved without charity. "Charity hides a multitude of sins," and yet the charitablest man in the world shall never have his score crossed without repentance. A catalogue of these fruits of the Spirit you may at your leisure make up to yourselves for your trial out of the fifth to the Galatians from the twenty-second verse, and 1 Pet. i. 5. All these graces together, though some belonging to one, some to another faculty of the soul, are yet all at once conceived in it, at once begin their life in the heart, though one be perhaps sooner ready to walk abroad and shew itself in the world than another. As in the second of Kings iv. 34, "Elisha went up on the bed and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth, and eyes upon his eyes, and hands upon his hands, and stretched himself upon the child, and the flesh of the child waxed warm," and verse 35, "the child sneezed seven times, and opened his eyes;" thus, I say, doth the Spirit apply itself unto the soul, and measure itself out to every part of it; and then the spiritual life comes at once into the soul—as motion beginning in the centre diffuses itself equally through the whole sphere, and affecteth every part of the circumference—"and the flesh of the child waxed warm;" where the flesh indefinitely signifieth every part of it together, and in the spiritual sense the whole soul; and this is when the inward principle, when the habit enters. Then for acts of life, one perhaps shews itself before another, as the child first "sneezed seven times," a violent disburdening itself of some troublesome humours that tickle in the head; to which may be answerable our spiritual clearing and purging ourselves by self-denial, "the laying aside every weight," then "opened his eyes," which in our spiritual creature, is spiritual illumination, or the eye of faith; these, I say, may first shew themselves as acts, and yet sometimes others before them, yet all alike in the habit, all of one standing, one conception, one plantation in the heart; though indeed ordinarily—like Esau and Jacob—the rougher come out first. We begin our spiri-

1 Pet. iv. 8.
Gal. v. 22.
1 Pet. i. 5.
2 Kings iv. 34.
ver. 35.
Heb. xii. 1.

tual life in repentance and contrition, and with many harsh twinges of the Spirit; and then comes faith, like Jacob at the heels, smooth and soft, applying all the cordial promises to our penitent souls. In brief, if any judgment be to be made, which of these graces is first in the regenerate man, and which rules in chief; I conceive self-denial and faith to be there first, and most eminent, according to that notable place where Christ seems to set down the order of graces in true disciples; "Let him deny himself, and take up his cross," that is, forego all his carnal delights, and embrace all manner of punishments and miseries, prepare himself even to go and be crucified, and "then follow Me;" that is, by a live faith believe in Christ, and prize Him before all the world besides; and indeed in effect these two are but one, though they appear to us in several shapes; for faith is nothing without self-denial, it cannot work till our carnal affections be subjected to it. Believe a man may, and have flesh and fleshly lust in him, but unless faith have the pre-eminence, faith is no faith. The man may be divided betwixt "the law of his members, and the law of his mind;" so many degrees of flesh, so many of spirit; but if there be constantly but an even balance, or more of flesh than Spirit, if three degrees of Spirit and five of flesh, then can there not be said to be any true self-denial, and consequently any faith, no more than that can be said to be hot, which hath more degrees of cold than heat in it. In brief, it is a good measure of self-denial that sets his faith in his throne, and when by it faith hath conquered, though not without continual resistance, when it hath once got the upper hand, then is the man said to be regenerate, whereupon it is that the regenerate state is called the life of faith. Faith is become a principle of the greatest power and activity in the soul. And so much for these four queries; from which I conceive every thing that is material, and directly pertinent to instruct you, and open the estate of a new creature, may be resolved. And for other niceties how far we may prepare ourselves, how co-operate and join issue with the Spirit, whether it work irresistibly by way of physical influence, or moral persuasion, whether being once had, it may totally or finally be lost again, and the like; these, I say, if they are fit for any, I am resolved are not

Mat. xvi. 24.

[Rom. vii. 23.]

Gal. ii. 20.

necessary for a country auditory to be instructed in. It will be more for your profit to have your hearts raised, than your brains puffed up; to have your spirits and souls inwardly affected to an earnest desire and longing after it, which will perhaps be somewhat performed, if we proceed to shew you the necessity of it, and unavailableness of all things else, and that by way of use and application.

And for the necessity of renewedness of heart, to demonstrate that, I will only crave of you to grant me, that the performance of any one duty towards God is necessary, and then it will prove itself; for it is certain no duty to God can be performed without it. For it is not a fair outside, a slight performance, a bare work done that is accepted by God; if it were, Cain would deserve as much thanks for his sacrifice as his brother Abel; for in the outside of them there was no difference, unless perhaps on Cain's side, that he was forwardest in the duty, and offered first. But it is the inside of [Gen. iv. 3.] the action, the marrow and bowels of it that God judges by. If a sum in gross, or a bag sealed up would pass for payment in God's audit, every man would come and make his accounts duly enough with Him; and what he wanted in gold for his payment should be made up in counters. But God goes more exactly to work when He comes to call thee to an account of thy stewardship; He is a God of thoughts, and [Ps. vii. 9.] a searcher of the heart and reins, and it will then be a harder business to be found just when He examines, or clear when He will judge. The least spot and blemish [Ps. li. 4.] in the face of it, the least maim or imperfection in the offering, the least negligence or coldness in the performance, nay, the least corruption in the heart of him that doth it, hath utterly spoiled the sacrifice. Be the bulk and skin of the work never so large and beautiful to the eye, if it come not from a sanctified, renewed, gracious heart, it will find no acceptance but that in the prophet, "Who hath required it [Isa. i. 2.] at your hands?" This is not it that God is taken with, or such as He commanded; it may pass for a compliment or a work of course, but never be valued as a duty or real service. Resolve thyself to dwell nowhere but in the Church, and there—like Simeon στηλίτης, in Eusebius[b]—plant thyself

[b] [Evagrii Hist. Eccl., lib. i. c. 18. E. H. iii. p. 265.]

continually in a pillar, with thy eyes, and words, fixed and shot up perpetually towards heaven. If there be not a spirit within thee to give light to the eyes, to add sighs and groans to the voice, all this that thou hast done is nothing but as a blind man's pretensions to sight, and a dumb man's claim to speech; and so in like manner in all our duties which the world and carnal men set a price on. And the reason is, because every spiritual seeming work done by a natural man is not truly so; it is nothing less than that which it is said to be; his prayers are not prayers, lip-labour perhaps, but not devotion; his serving of God is formality, not obedience; his hope of heaven, not a hope but a fancy. If God, or Satan, a judge, or a tempter, should come to reason with him about it, he would soon be worsted, never be able to maintain his title to it.

In brief, the fairest part of a natural man, that which is least counterfeit, his desire and good affections to spiritual things—which we call favourably natural desires of spiritual obedience—these I say, are but false desires, false affections. 1. They have no solidity or permanency in the will, only fluid and transitory, some slight sudden wishes, tempests and storms of a troubled mind, soon blown over: the least temptation will be sure to do it. They are like those wavering prayers without any stay of faith, Jam. i. 6, "like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and tossed." 2. That being which they have is counterfeit, they are not that which they are taken for. We are wont to say that acts are distinguished by their objects; he sees truly which judges the thing to be that that it is; it is true indeed that another man sees, he that takes blue for green, but he does not see truly; so also he only willeth a good thing that wills that in it which is truly good. Now the natural man, when he is said to choose spiritual things, as heaven, happiness, and the like, he desires not a spiritual, but a carnal thing; in desiring heaven, he desires somewhat that would free him from misery in happiness, a natural or moral good, that would be acceptable to any creature under heaven: and so a Turk will desire paradise, and that very impatiently, in hope that he shall have his fill of lust there. Generally you may mark that in such desires of spiritual things, it is some carnality that moves unregenerate men: somewhat it is that may

Jam. i. 6.

please the flesh, and then it is not the spiritual but the carnal part of it that is their object, which they woo and make love to; which you may judge of by this, that they are frequent and importunate in their wishes for glory, seldom or never for grace—though that also may be wished for carnally, to make us more renowned and better esteemed in the world. For the most part, I say, they desire glory, for that will make them happy, and out of danger of worldly misfortunes; remission of sins, for these lie heavy on their consciences, and give them many a twinge that they would fain be eased of; but seldom petition for grace, as if holiness without other conveniences or gains, were not worth the having. And this arises from hence, that our love of Christ grows by sending out and fastening our affections on Him as an object fittest for our turns, that will advantage us most; but not by receiving in His image and shape into our souls; this indeed would make us not only love, but imitate Him, and having once tasted, long after Him; this would sanctify our souls, whereas the other doth but only satisfy our greedy affections.

By what hath been said it is plain enough—though it might be much more amplified—that grace is of absolute necessity to performance of any holy work acceptable to God: that without it, whatsoever is done in spiritual matters is carnal, not indeed spiritual, but equivocally and absurdly so called. The natural man's desires of heaven are not desires of heaven: his faith, no faith: his believing of the Scripture, infidelity; because he doth not apply them particularly to himself to obey them. In sum, when he prays, hopes, or gives alms, he does somewhat indeed, and it is well done of him; but he doth not truly either pray, or hope, or give alms; there is some carnality in them that hath poisoned them, and quite altered the complexion, the constitution, and inward qualities of the work. And then indeed how impatient should every Christian be of this *coloquintida* within him? There is *mors in olla*, as the prophet once spake, that is, death in the pot, that so infects and kills every thing that comes out of it. How should we abhor, and loathe, and detest this old leaven that so besours all our actions; this heathenism of unregenerate carnal nature, which makes our best works so unchristian? To insist longer

2 Kings iv. 40.

upon this, were but to increase your thirst, not to satisfy it: to make you sensible of that *marasmus* and desperate drought that hath gone over your souls, but not to help you to any waters for the cure: that shall come next, as the last work of this exercise to be performed, in a word.

Having learnt what this new creature is, and how absolutely necessary to a Christian, O let us not defer one minute longer to examine our estates, whether we are yet renewed or no, and by the acts which we daily perform, observe whether the sanctifying habit be as yet infused into our souls. If the grounds of our best duties, that which moves us in our holiest actions, be found upon search to be but carnal; if a careful religious education, custom of the place which we live in, fear of human laws, nay, perhaps a good, soft, tender disposition, and the like, be the things that make thee love God, and perform holy duties, and not any inward principle of sanctity within thee: I counsel thee to think better of thine estate, and consider whether the like motives, had it so happened that thou hadst been born and brought up in Turkey, might not have made thee worship Mahomet. I would be sorry to be rigid; I fear thou wilt find they might: well then, a new course must be taken, all thy former heathen, carnal, or at best, good moral life, all thy formal performances, the best of thy natural desires must be content to be ranked here with circumcision, and uncircumcision availing nothing; there is no trust, or confidence to be placed on these Egyptian staves "of reed." And then, if thou wilt not live heartless for ever, if ever thou meanest to move or walk, or do any thing, you must to that Creator of spirits and lover of souls, and never leave soliciting till He hath breathed another breath into your nostrils, another soul into your soul: you must lay yourself at His feet, and with all the violence and rhetoric, and humility, that these wants will prompt thee to, and woo, and importune the Holy Spirit to overshadow thee, to conceive all holy graces spiritually in thee: and if thou canst not suddenly receive a gracious answer, that the Holy Ghost will come in unto thee, and lodge with thee this night, yet learn so much patience from thy beggarly estate, as not to challenge Him at thy own times, but comfortably to wait His leisure. There is employment

[Gal. vi. 15.] Is. xxxvi. 6.

enough for thee in the while to prepare the room against His coming, to make use of all His common graces, to cleanse and reform thy foul corruptions, that when the Spirit comes it may find thee swept and garnished. All the outward means which God hath afforded thee, He commands thee to make use of, and will require it at thy hands in the best measure, even before thou art regenerate; though thou sin in all thy unregenerate performances, for want of inward sanctity, yet it is better to have obeyed imperfectly than not at all: the first is weakness, the other desperate presumption; the first, material, partial obedience, the second, total disobedience. Yet whilst thou art preparing, give not over praying; they are acts very compatible; thou mayest do them both together. Whilst thou art a fortifying these little kingdoms within thee, send these ambassadors abroad for help, that thou mayest be capable of it when it comes. But above all things be circumspect, watch and observe the Spirit, and be perpetually ready to receive Its blasts; let It never have breathed on thee in vain; let thine ear be for ever open to Its whisperings: if It should pass by thee either not heard, or not understood, it were a loss that all the treasures upon earth could not repair, and for the most part you know It comes not in the thunder. Christ seldom speaks so loud now-a-days as he did to Saul. It is in a soft, still voice, and I will not promise you that men that dwell in a mill, that are perpetually engaged in worldly, loud employments, or that men asleep shall ever come to hear of it. The sum of all my exhortation is, after examination, to cleanse, and pray, and watch; carefully to cleanse thyself, incessantly to pray, and diligently to watch for the Sun of righteousness, when He shall begin to dawn, and rise, and shine in thy heart by grace. And do thou, O Holy Lord, work this whole work in us, prepare us by Thy outward, perfect us by Thy inward graces: awaken us out of the darkness of death, and plant a new seed of holy light and life in us: infuse into our heathen hearts a Christian habit of sanctity, that we may perform all spiritual duties of holiness; that we may glorify Thee here by Thy Spirit, and be glorified with Thee by Thy Christ hereafter.

Acts xix. [1 Kings xix. 12.]

Now to Him that hath elected us, hath, &c.

SERMON XXVIII.

2 Pet. iii. 3.

Scoffers walking after their own lusts.

That we may take our rise luckily, and set out with the best advantage, that we may make our preface to clear our passage to our future discourse, and so spend no part of our precious time unprofitably, we will by way of introduction examine what is here meant, 1, by scoffers, 2, by walking after their own lusts. And first, scoffers here do not signify those whom confidence joined to a good natural wit, hath taught to give and play upon every man they meet with, which in a moderate use is called εὐτραπελία, "facetiousness," in an immoderate, scurrility[a]. But scoffers here are of a more special stamp, those who deal out their scoffs only on God and religion. The word in the original (ἐμπαίζειν) signifies to mock, to abuse, and that either in words, and then it is rendered "scoffing;" or in our actions, when we promise any man to perform a business, and then deceive his expectation, and then it is rendered "deluding." So when Herod saw he was
Mat. ii. 16. mocked, ὅτι ἐνεπαίχθη, that he was "deluded" by the magicians. So that in the first primitive sense, scoffers must signify those who either laugh at God, or else delude Him in not performing what He expects, and they by their profession promised. In the secondary notion, to scoff is by way of argument to oppose any truth contumeliously or bitterly, as Solomon begins his discourse of the atheists'
Wisd. ii. 1. scoffs, "The ungodly said, reasoning with themselves;" and these are said to set their mouth against heaven, managing disputes, which have both sting and poison in them; the first to wound and overthrow the truth spoken of, the other to infect the auditors with a contrary opinion. And these

[a] [Aristot. Eth. Nic. iv. 8.]

rational scoffs, for which Socrates anciently was very famous, are ordinarily in form of question, as in the Psalmist often, "Where is now their God?" i. e. certainly, if they had a God, He would be seen at time of need, He would now shew Himself in their distress. In which they do not only laugh at the Israelites for being such fools as to worship Him that will not relieve them, but implicitly argue, that indeed there is no such God as they pretend to worship. And just in this manner were the scoffers in my text, who did not only laugh, but argue, saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?" persuading themselves, and labouring to prove to others, that what is spoken of Christ's second coming to judgment was but a mere dream, a μορμολύκειον, a bugbear, or fable to keep men in awe, and therefore laugh at it, as the Athenians did at the resurrection, Acts xvii. 3; "and when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked," &c., i.e. disputed sarcastically and contumeliously against it, that certainly there was no such matter. And thus also is the same word used of those which joined their reason and malice to disprove Christ's omnipotence, where they reviled and mocked Him, saying, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." In which speech the bitterest part of the scoff was the reason there used, plausible enough amongst ignorant Jews, that surely if He had any power, He would make use of it for Himself.

[Ps. xlii. 3, 10; lxxix. 10; cxv. 2.]

ver. 4.

[Acts xvii. 32.]

[Matt. xxvii. 42.]

Thirdly, to scoff is sometimes without words or actions to shew a contempt or neglect of any body. So Herod's mocking of Christ is set as an expression that He did not think Him worthy talking with. "He set Him at nought, and mocked Him, and sent Him back to Pilate;" He would not vouchsafe to take notice of Him, nor to be troubled with the examination of so poor, contemptible a fellow. And so in Aristotle[b], not to know a man's name, not to have taken so much notice of him, as to remember what to call him, is reckoned the greatest neglect, the unkindest scoff in the world, and is ordinarily taken very tenderly by any one who hath deserved any thing at our hands. So that in brief—to gather up what we have hitherto scattered—the scoffers here meant, are those, who promising themselves to God's service, do delude Him when He looks to find them amongst His

[Luke xxiii. 11.]

[b] [Aristot. Rhet., lib. ii. c. 2. § 26.]

servants, i. e. remain errand [c] atheists under a Christian profession, who by letting loose either their wits to profane jests, or their reason to heathenish conceits and disputings, or their actions to all manner of disobedience, demonstrate that indeed they care not for God, they scarce remember His
Ps. x. 4. name, neither is He in all their thoughts.

In the next place, walking after their own lusts, is giving themselves liberty to follow all the directions of corrupt polluted nature, in entertaining all conceits and practices which the pride of their understandings and rankness of their affections shall propose to them in opposition to God. And this without any reluctancy or twinge of conscience, walking on as securely and confidently as if it were indeed the right highway.

So that now you have seen the outside of the text, and looked it over in the gross, it is time to survey it more particularly in its parts, and those are two: 1. The sin of atheism, and the subjects in which it shews itself, "There shall come in the last days scoffers." 2. The motive and impellent to this sin, a liberty which men give themselves, to walk after their own lusts.

And first of atheism, and the subjects in whom it shews itself, "In the," &c. Where you may note that the words being in a form of a prophecy, do note a sort of people which were to come, in respect of St. Peter who writes it; and though in its first aspect it refer to the period of the Jewish nation, and destruction of Jerusalem, takes in the parallel state of things under the last age, and dotage, and declination of the world.
Mat. xxiv. Accordingly we see at the 24th of St. Matthew, the prophecy of both, as it were interwoven and twisted into each other; so that what St. Peter saith shall be, we may justly suspect is fulfilled amongst us, his future being now turned into a present, his prophecy into a story. In the Apostles' times, when Christianity was in the cradle, and wanted years and strength to move and shew itself in the world, there were but very few that would acknowledge it; many sects of philosophers, who peremptorily resolved themselves against this profession, joined issue with the Apostles in assiduous disputation, as we may find in the 17th of the Acts. Amongst those the

[c] [Errand or errant, an early way of spelling arrant.]

Epicureans did plainly deny that there was any God that governed the world, and laugh at any proof that Moses and the prophets could afford for their conviction. And here a man might think that his prophecy was fulfilled in his own days, and that he needed not to look beyond that present age for store of scoffers. Yet so it is, that the infidelity which he foresaw should in those last ages reign confidently in the world, was represented to him in a larger size and uglier shape than that of the present philosophers. The Epicurean unbelief seemed nothing to him, being compared to this Christian atheism, where men under the vizard of religion and profession of piety, are in heart arrant heathens, and in their fairest carriages do indeed but scoff, and delude, and abuse the very God they worship. Whence the note is, that the profession of Christianity is mixed with an infinite deal of atheism, and that, in some degree, above the heathenism of the perversest philosophers. There were in St. Peter's time Epicureans, and all sects of scoffers at Christianity, and yet the scoffers indeed, the highest degree of atheism, was but yet heaving; it would not rise and shew itself till the last days.

It is worth observing what variety of stratagems the devil hath always had to keep us in defiance with God, and to nourish in us that hostility and enmity against heaven, which is so deep and predominant in himself. He first set them a work to rebel and fortify themselves against God, and make themselves, by building of a tower, so impregnable that God Himself could not be able to disperse them. Afterwards, when by the punishment and defeating of that design, the world was sufficiently instructed that no arm of flesh, no bodily strength could make resistance against heaven; when the body could hold out in rebellion no longer, he then instructs the inward man, the soul, to make its approaches, and challenge heaven. Now the soul of man consisting of two faculties, the understanding and the will, he first deals with the understanding, and sets that up against God in many monstrous fashions; first, in deluding it to all manner of idolatrous worship, in making it adore the sun, the moon, and the whole host of heaven, which was a more generous kind of idolatry. Afterwards, in making them worship dogs and cats, onions and garlic, for so did the Egyptians; and this

Gen. xi. 14.

was a more sottish stupid affection; a man would wonder how the devil could make them such fools. Afterward he wrought still upon their understanding, in making them—under pretence of two laudable qualities, admiration and gratitude, admiration of any kind of virtue, and gratitude for any good turn—to deify and worship as gods any men which had ever done, either their nation, or private persons, any important good or favour. So that every *heros*, or noble, famous man, as soon as he was dead, was worshipped. It were long to shew you the variety of shifts in this kind, which the devil used to bring in the πολυθεότης of the Gentiles, i. e. their worshipping of many gods. In brief, this plot lasted thus till Christianity came into the world, and turned it out of doors, and at Christ's resurrection all the gods of the heathen expired. However, the devil still stuck close to that faculty of the soul which he had been so long acquainted with, I mean the understanding, and seeing through the whole world almost the doctrine of Christ had so possessed men, that he could not hope to bring in his heathen gods again, he therefore hath one design more on the understanding; seeing it is resolved to believe Christ in spite of heathenism, he then puzzles it with many doubts about this very Christ it is so possessed with. He raises up, in the first ages of the Church, variety of heresies concerning the union of His natures, equality of His person with the Father, and the like: and rung as many changes in men's opinions as the matter of faith was capable of. There was no truth almost in Christianity, but had its heretic to contradict and damn it. Now since at last, reason and truth, and the power of Scripture having outlived in a good degree fundamental error in opinion, hath almost expulsed the devil out of the head—or upper part of the soul, the understanding—his last plot is on the heel, i.e. the will and affections; and that he hath bruised terribly, according to that prophecy, Gen. iii. 15. He deals mainly on our manners, and strives to make them, if it be possible, sinful beyond capability of mercy. And this design hath thrived with him wonderfully; he hath wrought more opposition against God, more heresy against Christ in our lives than ever he was able to do in our doctrine. In a kingdom, where the custom of the country and education

Gen. iii. 15.

hath planted purity of faith in the understanding, he there labours to supplant and eradicate charity and devotion in the will, and crucifies Christ more confidently in our corrupt heathenish practices than ever the Jews did in their incredulity. And on this plot he hath stuck close, and insisted a long while, it being the last and most dangerous stratagem that the policy of hell can furnish him with, to corrupt, and curse, and make abominable a sincere belief by an atheistical conversation. And this doth prove in general, that it is the devil's aim, and from thence probably the Christian's curse, to have more hostility against God in our wills, and so to be more horrible atheists, than ever the heathen had in their understandings. Now that we may the more distinctly discover the Christian atheist, who is very orthodox in his opinion, very heretical in his practice; we will observe how every part of his life, every piece of his conversation doth directly contradict his doctrine, and pluck down and deface the very fabric of godliness, expunge those very notions of piety, which reason and Scripture hath erected in the soul. And first,

He is in his knowledge sufficiently catechised in the knowledge of Scripture, and is confident that all its dictates are to be believed, and commands practised. But if you look to find this assent confirmed by his practice, and expressed in his carriage, you are much mistaken in the business. Is he such a fool as to order his life according to the rigour of them? No, no doubt, it is not one man's work to believe the Scripture and obey it. Suppose I should tell you that there are but a few of you that read Scripture to that purpose, that observe any edict of piety or virtue only because the Scripture hath commanded it. There be many restraints that keep unregenerate men from sinning; a good disposition, religious education, common custom of the place or times where we live, human laws, and the like; and each or all of these may curb our forwardness, and keep us in some order. But who is there amongst us, that being tempted with a fair, lovely, amiable vice, which he may commit without any regret of his good nature, scandal to his former carriages, fear or danger of punishment, either future or present, or any other inconvenience: who is there, I say, that from the

mere awe and respect that he bears to Scripture, retires and calls himself off from that sin which he had otherwise fallen into? If I should see all manner of conveniences to sin in one scale, and the bare authority of the Scriptures in the other quite outweighing all them with its heaviness, I should then hope that our hearts were catechised, as well as our brains, in the acknowledgment of this truth, that Scripture is to be believed and obeyed. But I much fear me, if I should make an enquiry in every one of our hearts here single, the greatest part of the jury would bring in an evidence of guilt, that in any our most entire obediences some other respect casts the scales; and this is one piece of direct atheism, that though our understandings affirm, yet our will and affections deny that Scripture is for its own sake to be obeyed.

Secondly, our brains are well enough advised in the truth of the doctrine of God's essence and attributes, our understandings have a distinct conceit of awe and reverence, to answer every notion we have of God; and yet here also our conversation hath its postures of defiance, its scoffs and arts of reviling, as it were, to deface and scrape out every of these notions out of our wills, and to persuade both ourselves and others, that that knowledge doth only float[1] in our brains, but hath no manner of weight to sink it deep into our hearts. To glance at one or two of these; we believe, or at least pretend we do so, the immensity, i. e. the ubiquity and omnipresence of God, that He indeed is every where, to fill, to see, to survey, to punish; and yet our lives do plainly proclaim, that in earnest we mean no such matter; we shut up our hearts against God, and either as the Gadarenes did Christ, being weary of His presence, fairly entreat, or else directly banish Him out of our coasts, because He hath been or is like to be the destruction of some swine, i. e. bestial affections in us. And in sum, those bodies of ours, which He hath marked out for His temples, we will scarce allow Him for His inn to lodge with us one night. Again, can we expect to be credited when we say we believe the ubiquity and omnipresence of God, and yet live and sin as confidently as if we were out of His sight or reach? Do we behave ourselves in our outrages, in our luxury, nay, even

[1] ἐπιπολῆς.

Mark v. 17.

in our gravest devotions, as if God were within ken? Without all doubt, in every minute almost of our lives we demonstrate that we doubt either of His omnipresence to see, or else His justice to punish us: for those very things which we dare not to venture on in the sight of an earthly magistrate that may punish us, nay, of a spy that may complain of us, nay, of an enemy that will upbraid us, nay, of a friend that will check and admonish us; we never doubt, or demur, or delay to practise in private, or the dark, where still God is present to oversee and punish. And if this be not a scoffing, a deluding, a mere contemning of God, to do that without any fear or regret in His sight, which we never offer to attempt before a man, nay, a friend, I know not what may be counted atheism. In like manner, we acknowledge God to be *αὐτάρκης*, "all-sufficient;" and if we should be examined in earnest, we would confess that there is no ability in any creature to bestow or provide any good thing for us; and yet our will here also hath its ways and arguments of contradiction. Our whole life is one continued confutation of this piece of our faith; our tremblings, our jealousies, our distrusts, our carefulness, our worldly providence and importunate carking, our methods and stratagems of thrift and covetousness, and the whole business of our lives in wooing, and soliciting, and importuning every power of nature, every trade and art of the world, to succour, to assist, and provide for us, are most egregious evidences that we put no trust or confidence in God's all-sufficiency, but wholly depend and rely upon the arm of flesh, both to raise and sustain us. This very one fashion of ours, in all our distresses, to fly to and call upon all manner of second causes, without any raising or elevating our eyes or thoughts toward God, from whom cometh our help, plainly shews that God still dwells abroad in tents: we have seen or heard of Him, but have not yet brought Him home into our hearts, there to possess, and rectify, and instruct our wills, as well as our understandings. [2 Sam. vii. 6.]

Thirdly, the whole mystery of Christ articulately set down in our Creed we as punctually believe, and to make good our names, that we are Christians in earnest, we will challenge and defy the fire and fagot to persuade us out of it; and

these are good resolutions, if our practices did not give our faith the lie, and utterly renounce at the church door whatsoever we professed in our pews. This very one thing, that He which is our Saviour, shall be our Judge, that He which was "crucified, dead, and buried, sits now at the right hand of God, and from thence shall come to judge the world;" this main part, yea, sum of our belief, we deny and bandy against all our lives long. If the story of Christ coming to judgment, set down in the 25th of Matthew after the 30th verse, had ever entered through the doors of our ears to the inward closets of our hearts, it is impossible but we should observe and practise that one single duty there required of us. Christ there as a Judge exacts and calls us to account for nothing in the world, but only works of mercy, and according to the satisfaction which we are able to give Him in that one point, He either entertains or repels us; and therefore our care and negligence in this one business, will prove us either Christians or infidels. But alas! it is too plain, that in our actions we never dream either of the judgment or the arraignment; our stupid neglect of this one duty argues us not only unchristian but unnatural. Besides our alms-deeds, which concern only the outside of our neighbour, and are but a kind of worldly mercy, there are many more important, but cheaper works of mercy, as good counsel, spiritual instructions, holy education of them that are come out of our loins, or are committed to our care, seasonable reproof, according to that excellent place, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart, but in any wise reprove him:" a care of carrying ourselves that we may not scandal, or injure, or offer violence to the soul and tender conscience of him that is flexible to follow us into any riot. These and many other works of mercy in the highest degree, as concerning the welfare of other men's souls, and the chief thing required of us at the day of judgment, are yet so outdated in our thoughts, so utterly defaced, and blotted out in the whole course of our lives, that it seems we never expect that Christ in His majesty as a Judge, whom we apprehend, and embrace, and hug in His humility as a Saviour. Beloved, till by some severe hand held over our lives, and particularly by the daily study and exercise of some work of mercy

Lev. xix. 7.

or other, we demonstrate the sincerity of our belief; the saints on earth and angels in heaven will shrewdly suspect, that we do only say over that part of our Creed, that we believe only that which is for our turn, the sufferings and satisfactions of Christ, which cost us nothing, but do not proceed to His office of a Judge, do not either fear His judgments, or desire to make ourselves capable of His mercies. Briefly, whosoever neglects or takes no notice of this duty of exercising works of mercy, whatsoever he brags of in his theory or speculation, in his heart either denies or contemns Christ as Judge, and so destroys the sum of his faith; and this is another kind of secret atheism.

Fourthly, our Creed leads us on to a belief and acknowledgment of the Holy Ghost; and it is well we have all conned His name there, for otherwise I should much fear that it would be said of many nominal Christians, what is reported of the Ephesian disciples, "They have not so much as heard whether there be an Holy Ghost or no." Acts xix. 2. But not to suspect so much ignorance in any Christian, we will suppose indeed men to know whatsoever they profess, and enquire only whether our lives second our professions, or whether indeed they are mere infidels and atheistical, in this business concerning the Holy Ghost. How many of the ignorant sort which have learnt this name in their Catechism or Creed, have not yet any further use to put it to, but only to make up the number of the Trinity, have no special office to appoint for Him, no special mercy, or gift, or ability to beg of Him in the business of their salvation, but mention Him only for fashion's sake, not that they ever think of preparing their bodies or souls to be temples worthy to entertain Him, not that they ever look after "the earnest of the Spirit" in their hearts! 2 Cor. i. 22. Further yet, how many better learned amongst us do not yet in our lives acknowledge Him in that epithet annexed to His title, the Holy Ghost, i. e. not only eminently in Himself holy, but causally, producing the same quality in us, from thence called the sanctifying and renewing Spirit! how do we for the most part fly from, and abandon, and resist, and so violently deny Him, when He once appears to us in this attribute! When He comes to sanctify us, we are not patient of so much sourness, so much humility, so much

non-conformity with the world, as He begins to exact of us; we shake off many blessed motions of the Spirit, and keep ourselves within garrison, as far as we can out of His reach, lest at any turn He should meet with, and we should be converted. Lastly, the most ordinary morally qualified, tame Christians amongst us, who are not so violent as to profess open arms against this Spirit, how do they yet reject Him out of all their thoughts! How seldom do many peaceable orderly men amongst us, ever observe their wants, or importune the assistance of this Spirit! In sum, it was a shrewd speech of the fathers[d], which will cast many fair outsides at the bar for atheists, "that the life of an unregenerate man is but the life of an heathen," and that it is our regeneration only that raises us up ἐξ ἐθνῶν, from being still mere Gentiles. He that believes in his Creed the Person, nay, understands in the schools the attributes and gifts of the Holy Ghost, and yet sees them only in the fountain, neither finds nor seeks for any effects of them in his own soul; he that is still unregenerate, and continues still gaping and yawning, stupid and senseless in this his condition is still, for all his Creed and learning, in effect an atheist. And the Lord of heaven give him to see, and endeavours to work, and a heart to pray, and His Spirit to draw and force him out of this condition.

Fifthly, not to cramp in every article of our Creed into this discourse, we will only insist on two more. We say therefore that we believe "the Forgiveness of Sins," and it is a blessed confidence, that all the treasures in the world cannot equal. But do ourselves keep equipage, and hand in hand accompany this profession? Let me catechise you a while. You believe the forgiveness of sins, but I hope not absolutely, that the sufferings of Christ shall effectually clear every man's score at the day of judgment: well then, it must be meant only of those that by repentance and faith are grafted into Christ, and shall appear at that great marriage in a wedding-garment, which shall be acknowledged the livery and colours of the Lamb. But do our lives ever stand to this explication and restriction of the article? Do they ever expect this beloved remission by performing the condi-

[d] Clemens Alex. Strom., p. 281. [ut supr.]

tion of repentance? Do we ever go about to make ourselves capable of receiving this mercy conditionally offered us? Nay, do we not by our wilful stupidity, and pertinacious continuing in sin, nullify in respect of us all that satisfaction of Christ, and utterly abandon those means which must bring home this remission to us? The truth is, our faith runs only on general terms, we are willing to lay all our sins on Christ's shoulders, and persuade ourselves somewhat slightly and coldly, that He will bear them in the root and in the fruit, in the bullion and in the coin, in the gross and in the retail, i. e. both our original and our actual transgressions: but we never take any course to rest satisfied that we in particular shall participate of this happiness. This requires the humiliation of the whole man, the spirit of bondage for a while, afterwards a second purity and virginity of the soul recovered by repentance, and then a soberly grounded faith and confidence, and an expressing of it by our own forgiving of others. And till this piece of our Creed be thus explained and interpreted in our conversation, we remain but confident atheists, not able to persuade any body that hears us that indeed we believe what we profess.

Sixthly and lastly, "the Resurrection of the Body," and its consequent, "Everlasting Life," is the close of our faith, and end, and prop, and encouragement, and consummation of our hope; and yet we take most pains of all to prove ourselves infidels in this; our whole carriage, both in the choice and observance of our religion, shew that we do not depend on it, that we put no confidence in the resurrection. If we went on this assurance, we should contemn any worldly encouragement, and make the same thing both the object and end of our service. We should scorn to take notice of so poor a thing as profit or convenience is, in a matter of so high importance, knowing and expecting that our reward shall be great in heaven. This one thought of a resurrection, and an infinite reward of any faithful undertaking of ours, would make us disdain, and almost be afraid of any temporal recompense for our worship of God, for fear it should, by paying us beforehand, deprive us of that everlasting one. We should catch and be ambitious of that expression of devotion, which were most painful and least pro-

fitable as to worldly advantage: and yet we in the stupidity of atheistical hearts are so improvidently covetous, so hasty and impatient in our religion, that unless some present gain allure and draw us, we have no manner of life, or spirit, or alacrity to this, as we count it, unprofitable service of God. The least encumbrance in the world will fright us from the greatest forwardness, and nimbleness, and activity in religion: and the least appearance of promotion, or other like encouragement, will produce and raise in us these affections and expressions of zeal, which the expectation of the resurrection could never work in us. Our religion is somewhat like that of the Samaritans, before Christ's time, either Jews or heathens, according as their king Antiochus would have them[e]; after Christ's time were perpetually either Jews or Christians, according as the Romans, their new lords and masters, either threatened or granted privilege to the Jews. If there were any thing to be gotten by the profession, they would be as solemn Christians as any. So when the Goths and Vandals overrun Italy, and—whether upon good affection or compulsion from God, I know not—spared them that fled to the basilica in Rome[f], the place where the Christians exercised; then, I say, they which formerly persecuted the Christians, now bore them company very friendly to their churches, and to save their lives fled to the temple for a refuge, which before they abomined; and made use of Christianity for their safeguard, which they would not own for their religion, and hurried to that sanctuary for their lives, which they would not visit for their souls. The condition of our religion is like that which is upbraided to Ephraim,

Hos. x. 11. "Ephraim is like an heifer that loveth to tread out the corn."

[Deut. xxv. 4.] It was prohibited by the law to muzzle the ox or heifer that treadeth out the corn; it was allowed them to feed as long as they did the work, and that made Ephraim love the toil so well, because that at the very time he performed the labour, he enjoyed the fruit of it; had, as we say, his wages in his hand; had some present emolument that would ingratiate his work to him; was not left to such a tedious expectation,

[e] Josephus, Antiq. Jud., lib. xii. c. 5. [vol. i. p. 533. ed. Huds.] et lib. xi. c. 8. [§ 6. p. 504.]

[f] [Cf. S. August. De Civit. Dei, lib. i. c. 1. Op., tom. vii. init.]

to so long a date as to wait for his reward till the resurrection: those were too hard terms for him, he could not endure to be tied so long up to the empty rack, or feed upon the bit. And thus hasty are we in the exacting of our reward for our service of God: we will never set our hands to it, unless we may make our conditions: we are resolved not to be such fools, as to serve God for nought, to spend the quickest of our spirits in a sour crabbed profession, and expect our thanks at doomsday. This plainly demonstrates, that however our theory be possessed, our practice places no trust, no confidence, no assurance in that part of our Creed, the resurrection. Again, it was an excellent argument to persuade doubtful Christians in the youth and nonage of the Church, of the certainty of the resurrection, that religious men, and those whom undoubtedly God loved, were full of sufferings in this world, and lived and died many of them without any expression of God's favour to them, which made them certainly to conclude, that no doubt God hath some other course to exhibit Himself in the riches of His mercy to them; and seeing there was no hope but in another world, "Verily there should be a reward for the righteous, doubtless there is a God that judgeth the earth;" and by this argument we may try ourselves for the sincerity of our faith in this business. If we can be patient to endure afflictions here, and not complain or grumble for a respite and deliverance, but keep all our hopes to be accomplished, defer all our happiness to be performed to us at the resurrection, and though God kill us, yet trust in Him, and be able to see through death, in a trust "that our Redeemer lives, and that with these eyes we shall behold Him," then may we cheer up, and persuade ourselves on good grounds that our hearts and lives do assent to the resurrection, which our tongues brag of: "Take no heaviness to heart, but drive it away and remember the end." But if this consideration cannot digest the least oppression of this life, cannot give us patience for the lightest encumbrance, but for all our Creed we still fly out into all outrages of passion and ecstacies of impatience, we plainly betray ourselves men of this present world, whose happiness or misery is only that which is temporary, and before our eyes, are not able by the perspective of faith to

[Ps. lviii. 11.]

[Job xiii. 15.] Job xix. 25.

Ecclus. xxxviii. 20.

behold that which easily we might, all our wants relieved, all our injuries revenged, all our wounds bound up in the day of the resurrection: but all our life long we repine and grumble, and are discontented as men without hope; and whilst we do thus, what do we but act the part of these atheists here in my text, scoffing and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming," in the next verse to my text. This very impatience and want of skill in bearing the brunts of this our warfare, is but a piece of cowardly atheism, either a denying or mocking at the resurrection. Every sigh is a scoff, every groan a gibe, every fear a sly art of laughing at the stupidity of those who depend upon the fulfilling of the promise of His coming. Lastly, say we what we will, we live as if there were no resurrection, as Sadducees, if not as atheists; all our designs look no further than this life, all our contrivances are defeated and frustrate in the grave; we manage ourselves with so little understanding, that any spectator would judge by our actions that it is no injury to compare us to the beasts that perish and never return again. Certainly if we had any design upon heaven or another life, we would here make some provision for it, "make ourselves friends of our unrighteous mammon, that when we fail, they may receive us into everlasting habitations," i. e. use those good things that God hath given us with some kind of providence, that they may stand us in stead when we have need of them, i. e. not only as instruments to sin—for that is to get us more enemies—but as harbingers to be sent before us to heaven. It was a bitter sarcasm of the fool to the abbot on his death-bed, that the abbot deserved his staff, as being the verier fool of the two, that being straight to die, to remove his tent to another world, he had sent none of his household-stuff before him. The truth is, we live generally as men that would be very angry, much displeased if any should persuade us there were a resurrection, the very mentioning of it to us might seem to upbraid our ordinary practices, which have nothing but the darkness of death and silence of the grave to countenance them. I may justly say that many ignorant heathens, which were confident there was nothing beyond this life, expected certainly with death to be annihilated, and turn again into a perpetual

[1 Thess. iv. 13.]

[Ps. xlix. 20.]

[Luke xvi. 9.]

nothing; yet either for the awe they bore to virtue, or fear of disgrace after death, kept themselves more regularly, lived more carefully than many of us Christians. And this is an horrid accusation, that will lie very heavy upon us, that against so many illuminated understandings the ignorance of the Gentiles should rise up in judgment, and the learned Christian be found the most desperate atheist. I have been too large upon so rigid a doctrine as this, and I love and pray God I may always have occasion to come up to this place upon a more merciful subject: but I told you even now out of Lev. xix. 17, that it was no small work of mercy, it was the most friendly office that could be performed any man, to reprehend, and as the text saith, "not to suffer sin upon thy neighbour," especially so sly a covert lurking sin as this of atheism, which few can discern in themselves. I shall now come to application, which because the whole doctrine spoke morally to your affections, and so in a manner prevented uses, shall be only a recapitulation and brief knitting up of what hitherto hath been scattered at large.

Lev. xix. 17.

Seeing that the devil's policy of deluding, and bewitching, and distorting our understandings, either with variety of false gods, or heresies raised upon the true, is now almost clearly out-dated, and his skill is all bent to the deforming of the will, and defacing the character of God, and the expression of the sincerity of our faith in our lives; we must deal with this enemy at his own weapon, learn to order our munition according to the assault, and fortify that part most impregnably, toward which the tempest binds and threatens. There is not now so much danger to be feared from the inroad of heretics in opinion as in practice, not so much atheism to be dreaded from the infidelity of our brains, as the heathenism and gentilism of our lusts, which even in the midst of a Christian profession deny God even to His face. And therefore our chiefest frontiers and fortifications must be set up before that part of the soul, our most careful watch and sentinel placed upon our affections, lest the devil enter there and depopulate the whole Christian, and plant the atheist in his room. To this purpose we must examine what seeds are already sown, what treachery is a working

within; and no doubt most of us at the first cast of the eye shall find great store, unless we be partial to ourselves, and bring in a verdict of mercy, and construe that weakness, which indeed signifies atheism.

When upon examination we find our lives undermining our belief, our practices denying the authority of Scripture, and no whit forwarder to any Christian duty upon its commands; when we find God's essence and attributes reviled and scoffed at in our conversation, His omnipresence contemned by our confidence in sinning, and argued against [Ps. x. 4.] by our banishing God out of all our thoughts, His all-sufficiency doubted of by our distrusts, and our scorn to depend upon it; when we perceive that our carriages do fall off at this part of our belief in Christ, that He shall come again to be our Judge, and by our neglect of those works, especially of mercy, which He shall then require of us, shew that indeed we expect Him not, or think of Him as a Judge, but only as a Saviour; when we observe our wills resisting the gifts, and falsifying the attribute, whilst our Creed confesses the person of the Holy Ghost, and see how little, how nothing of the sanctifying Spirit, of the earnest of our regeneration is in our hearts, and we still stupidly senseless of the want; when we believe forgiveness of sins, and that only upon condition of repentance, and yet abhor so much as to hear or think of the performing of it, or to make good that mercy to others which ourselves challenge of God; lastly, when we prove to ourselves, and all the world beside, by our requiring of a present reward for all our goodness, and ruling our religion to our earthly profit, by our impatience of any affliction, by our heathenish neglect, and stupidity, and riot, that we do not in earnest look for the resurrection to life; when, I say, by a just, but exact survey and inquest, we find these so many degrees of secret atheism in us, then must we shrift, and purge, and cleanse, and rinse our souls from these dregs of heathenism; then must we humble ourselves below the dust, and not dare to look the veriest Gentile in the face, till we have removed this plague from us. And do Thou, O Lord, assist our endeavours, and by the violence of Thy Spirit force and ravish us in our lives, as well as belief, to a sincere acknowledgment and expres-

sion of every minute part of that religion which is purely Christian, that we may adore Thee in our hearts as well as our brains, and being sanctified throughout, from any tincture, or colour, or suspicion of irreligion in either power of our soul, we may glorify Thee here, and be glorified by Thee hereafter.

Now to Him which hath elected us, hath, &c.

SERMON XXIX.

2 Pet. iii. 3.

Scoffers walking after their own lusts.

It is an excellent observation of Aristotle's, that rich men are naturally most contumelious, most given to abuse and deride others, which he expresses thus, in the seventh of his Politics[a]; ἡ δὲ τῆς εὐτυχίας ἀπόλαυσις καὶ τὸ σχολάζειν μετ' εἰρήνης, ὑβριστὰς ποιεῖ μᾶλλον. The contentment which they enjoy in the continuance of their worldly happiness, the perpetual rest, and quiet, and tranquillity, which their plenty bestows on them, makes them contemn and despise the estate of any other man in the world; upon this conceit, saith the same Aristotle[b], (ὅτι ὑπερέχειν φαίνονται,) that their happiness is elevated infinitely above the ordinary pitch; that whatever contentments any other sort of people can glory or delight in, is but some imaginary, slight, poor happiness that men are fain to solace themselves withal, to keep them from melancholy, all far enough below the size of their felicity, which all agreeable circumstances have conspired to make exactly complete. Hence is it that you shall ordinarily observe the rich man, in this confidence of his opinion, that no man is happy but himself, either contemn or pity the poverty, and improvidence, and perhaps the sottishness of such spirits, that can rejoice or boast in the possession of wisdom, knowledge, nay, even of God's graces; no object is more ridiculous in his eye, than either a scholar or a Christian, that knows not the value of riches: for saith Aristotle, ὁ πλοῦτος οἷον τιμή τις ἐστὶ τῆς ἀξίας τῶν ἄλλων, διὸ φαίνεται πάντα ὤνια εἶναι αὐτοῦ, "Money is reckoned the price of all things

[a] [Aristot. Polit., lib. vii. c. 15.]

[b] [Aristot. Rhetor., lib. ii. c. 16.]

else," that which can easily purchase whatever else we can stand in need of; and therefore the rich man, if he could think learning and religion worth any thing, having his money by him (which is in effect every thing) thinks he can call for them when he pleases. In the mean, he hath more wit than to forsake his pleasures, and go to school to the Stoic, to divest himself of his robes, and put on the sourness, the rigid, sad behaviour which the profession of wisdom or Christianity requires. He is better pleased in his present pomp, than to go and woo that misery and ruggedness, which the severity of discipline looks for. Let silly beggars boast of the contents of wisdom or hopes of heaven, *at mihi plaudo domi*[c], his coffers at home are better companions than all the melancholy of books, or sullen solaces of the spirit. He hath learnt by experience, that he ought to pity and contemn these fictions of delight which the poets fetch from the Fortunate Islands to delude, and cozen, and comfort beggars: his glory, and pride, and riches, are happiness indeed, and whatever else the poverty of the world can boast of, are objects not of his envy but his scorn.

What we have hitherto noted to you concerning the rich man is appliable on the same grounds to any sort of people which have fixed upon any worldly content, and resolved upon some one object, beside which they will never value or prize any thing. Thus the epicure or voluptuous man, who hath set up his idol lust, to whom he owes all his sacrifice, and from whom he expects all his good fortune, that hath fixed his pillars, and cast his anchor, and is peremptorily constant in his course, that he is resolved for ever to walk in; this man, I say, being possessed with an opinion of the happiness which he is placed in, like the sun in his pride, rejoices to run his course, and scorns any contrary motion that he meets or hears of; and only observes the ways of virtue and religion, to hate and laugh at them; and the further he walks, the deeper he is engaged in this humour of self-content, and contempt of others, of security, and scoffing. For this is the force and implicit argument covertly contained in the close of these words, "There shall come in the last days scoffers," &c.; i. e. this resolution to

[c Horat. Sat. i. 1. 65.]

walk on in their own lusts hath brought them to this pitch of atheism, to scoff and deride both God and goodness. "There shall," &c.

We have heretofore divided these words, and in them observed and handled already the sin of atheism, together with the subjects in which it works, Christians of the last times, noted from this prophetic speech, "There shall come in the last days scoffers." We now come to the second particular, the motive or impellent to this sin, a liberty which men give themselves, and a content which they take to walk after their own lusts.

The second chapter of the Wisdom of Solomon is an excellent description of the atheist: and though it be of apocryphal authority, yet it is of most divine canonical truth. I could find in my heart, nay, I can scarce hold from reading and paraphrasing the whole chapter to you; it is so solid, so strong, so perfect a discourse upon this theme, it contains so many strains of atheistical reason in opposition to godliness, and the root, and growth, and maturity of this tree of knowledge and death, that the clear understanding of that one place might suffice without any enlargement of proofs or expressions. But for brevity sake, and on promise that you will at your leisure survey it, I will omit to insist on it: only in the end of the twenty-first verse, after all the expressions of their atheistical counsels, you have the reason, or motive, or first worker of all, "for their own wickedness hath blinded them;" their stupid perseverance in those dark ways, in that black Tophet on earth, habituate custom of sinning, had so thickened their sight, had drawn such a film over their eyes, that in the judgment of divine affairs they were stark blind: they could see nothing in all the mystery of godliness which was worth embracing, and therefore had no employment but to walk on after their own lusts, and to scoff at those that were so foolishly friendly to them as to call them out of their way: they were well enough acquainted with their own paths, they could walk them blindfold, and therefore had more wit than forsake the road for a nearer by-way. The issue of all is this, that a voluptuous course of life is a great promoter and advancer of atheism: there had never been so many scoffers in the Chris-

[Wisd. ii. 21.]

tian world, had there not been also those that were resolute to walk after their own lusts.

In the first verse of the Psalms, there be steps and rounds, and gradations of a sinner specified; 1. Walking in the counsel of the ungodly; 2. Standing in the way of sinners; 3. Sitting in the seat of the scorner: the two first being degrees in his motion, several stages of his journey to this ἀκμὴ, or top pitch of sinning in the last. Walking in the counsel of the ungodly is the first entrance to his course; and he that hath such a rise as this, hath a great advantage of all other sinners; he will perform his race with speed, and come suddenly to his goal. This deliberate walking in the ways, and with the companions and contrivers of ungodliness, this partaking and prosecuting of the counsels, the enjoying this familiarity with sin, proves a strong engagement to continue and persevere, and delight in its acquaintance. Yet because walking is a laborious motion, and will tire the sinner in time, he is fain to betake himself to an easier posture, and that is standing in the way of sinners, continuing in a still, sober, quiet, stupid tranquillity of sinning, standing like a Mercury's post in the midst of a road, never removed or stirred an inch, though never so justled by the passengers. Let all the contrary virtues never so thwart and cross him, he hath fixed his station, and neither force nor allurements shall make him move. Yet because standing also is a painful posture, with which the valiantest legs will at last be numbed, if not tired, he hath in the last place his chair of ease and state, and here he sets up his rest, here he sins with as much majesty as delight: 1. *in cathedra*, as a seat of greatness, lording it, and sinning imperiously, commanding every spectator to follow his example of scoffing at God and goodness: 2. *in cathedra*, as a seat of authority, sinning doctorally, and magisterially, by his practice defining the lawfulness of these scoffs, even setting up a school of atheism: and 3. *in cathedra*, as a seat of rest, and ease, and pleasure, which he is resolved never to rise out of, which he hath reposed himself in, that he may laugh at ease, and without any pains or trouble or charges blaspheme God for ever. And for the most part indeed he proves as bad as his resolution, having once given himself this licence of laughing at and deriding [Ps. i. 1.]

religion, he seldom ever recovers himself to a sober countenance; like men whose custom of scoffing hath made wry-mouthed, he lives and continues, and for the most part dies scoffing. He comes as it were laughing into hell, and seldom forsakes this habit of profaneness, till horror hath put smiling out of date. There is not a sin in the world that sits closer to him which hath once entertained it, and he that is once a merry atheist, seldom, if ever, proves a sad sober Christian. He is seated in his chair of scorning, and contemns the mercy of that Spirit that should take him out of it. Thus you see, that walking in the steps, and standing in the way, i. e. following the commands of their own lusts, they are soon arrived to the pitch of atheists, to the chair of scorners, and then there is but little preferment more that they are capable of, unless they will strive with Lucifer for pre-eminence in hell, or else challenge Rabshakeh to rail, or Julian to blaspheme. But this is the highest degree of scoffers, and I hope the devil hath but few such valiant, bold, forward champions in the world, since Julian or Lucian's time. And therefore I hope I have pricked no man's conscience here whilst I have spoke of them; but I have formerly proved that there be some lower, tamer, secret degrees of atheism, which every man may chance to spy in some angle or corner of his soul, some implicit artificial ways of scoffing, or abasing God, which most of us are guilty of; and it will be worthy our pains to shew how these seeds are warmed, and cherished, and animated by a licentious life. Hippocrates[d] observes of the Scythians that they do not swathe themselves, nor bind in their loins with any kind of girdle, but go with their bodies very loose, that they may ride the easier, which is the only exercise they use: and from hence, saith he, they grow so corpulent and fleshy, so broad and bulky, that they are both ugly and unwieldy, an eye-sore to others and cumbersome to themselves: these accessions, which in other people extend themselves proportionably in length and breadth, in height as well as bulk, in them grow all into thickness; so that you shall see a pigmy in stature as big as a giant in the girt. Thus is it with those whose affections are not ruled, and restrained in order, and within limits, are not swathed and kept in, have not some set terms of tem-

[d] Hippocrates, de Aqua, Aere et Loco. [ut supr.]

perance, and other virtues, beyond which they suffer not themselves to fly out. If, I say, these affections within us be by the owners left ungirt to their own freedom, they will never grow upward toward heaven; they will still be dwarfish, of small growth in religion; but yet like those Scythians, they will run into a strange bulk and corpulence, into some unwieldy misshapen forms of atheism, or the like. Certainly they will grow into a greater breadth than the reasonable soul will be able to manage; unless the spirit vouchsafe to come down, and contract and call it into bounds, it will increase beyond all proportion, beyond all acknowledgment of God or religion. We are used to say in nature, that all moist things are apt to be contained in other terms, but hardly in their own; the water is easily cooped up in a glass or bucket, where there are boundaries to keep it in, but being let loose on a table or a floor, it flies about and never stays again till it meet with some ocean or hollow place which may inclose, and bestow the consistency on it which it has not of itself. Thus you may see a river, whilst it is kept within the channel, go on in its stream and course very soberly and orderly, but when it hath overswelled the banks which before kept it in, then doth it run about the pastures, scorns to be kept within any compass. Thus is it with the soul of man; if it be ordered within terms and bounds, if it have a strict hand held over it, if it be curbed and brought to its postures, if it have reason and grace, and a careful tutor to order it, you shall find it as tame a creature as you need deal with; it will never straggle or stray beyond the confines which the spirit hath set it; the reason is, because though it be in itself fluid and moist, and ready to run about like water, yet *Deus firmavit aquas*, "God hath made a firmament betwixt the waters," as He did Gen. i. 7, i. e. He hath established it, and given it a consistency, that it should not flow or pour itself out beyond its place. But if this soul of man be left to its own nature, to its own fluid, wild, incontinent condition, it presently runs out into an ocean, never stays, or considers, or consults, but rushes headlong into all inordinacy; having neither the reins of reason nor God to keep it in, it never thinks of either of them, and unless by chance, or by God's mercy, it fall into their hands, it is likely to run riot for ever. Being once let loose,

Gen. i. 7.

it ranges, as if there were neither power on earth to quell nor in heaven to punish it. Thus do you see how fluid, how inconstant the soul is of its own accord, how prone it is, how naturally inclined to run over like a stream over the banks, and if it be not swathed, and kept in, if it be left to the licentious condition of itself, how ready is it to contemn both reason and God, and run headlong into atheism. Nay, we need not speak so mercifully of it, this very licentiousness is the actual renouncing of religion, this very "walking after their own lusts," is not only a motive to this sin of scoffing, but the very sin itself.

A false conception in the womb is only a rude, confused, ugly chaos, a mere lump of flesh, of no kind of figure or resemblance, gives only disappointment, danger, and torment to the mother. It is the soul at its entrance which defines, and trims, and polishes into a body, that gives it eyes, and ears, and legs, and hands, which before it had not distinctly and severally, but only rudely altogether with that mass or lump. Thus is it with the man, till religion hath entered into him as a soul to inform and fashion him; as long as he lives thus at large, having no terms, or bounds, or limits to his actions, having no form, or figure, or certain motion defined him, he is a *mola*, a mere lump of man, an arrant atheist; you cannot discern any features or lineaments of a Christian in him; he hath neither eyes to see, nor ears to hear, nor hands to practise any duty that belongs to his peace. Only it is religion must take him up, must smooth and dress him over, and according to its etymon must *religare*, swathe and bind up this loose piece of flesh, must animate and inform him, must reduce him to some set form of Christianity, or else he is likely after a long and fruitless travel to appear a deformed monstrous atheist. But not to deal any longer upon similes, lest we seem to confound and perplex a truth by explaining it, I told you the licentious, voluptuous life was itself perfect heathenism. For can you imagine a man to be any but a Gentile, who hath abandoned all love, all awe, all fear, all care of God—any one of which would much contract and draw him into compass—who hath utterly put off every garb of a Christian, who hath enjoyed the reins so long, that now he is not sensible, or at least

contemns the curb or snaffle if he be but checked with it, gets it in his teeth and runs away with it more fiercely. The heathen are noted not so much that they worshipped no god at all, but that they worshipped so many, and none of them the true. Every great friend they had, every delight and pleasure, every thing that was worth praying for, straight proved their god, and had its special temple erected for its worship. So that do but imagine one of them every day worshipping every god whom he acknowledged, in its several oratory, spending his whole life, and that too little too, in running from one temple to another, and you have described our licentious man posting on perpetually to his sensual devotions, worshipping, adoring, and sacrificing every minute of his life, to some idol-vanity, and bestowing as much pains and charges in his profane, heathenish pleasures, as ever the Gentiles did on their false gods, or the most supererogating papist on their true.

We are wont to say in divinity [e], and that without an hyperbole, that every commission of sin is a kind of idolatry, an incurvation, and bending down of the soul to some creature, which should always be erect, looking up to heaven, from whence it was infused, like water naturally inclined to climb and ascend as high as the fountain, or head from whence it sprang. And then certainly a licentious life is a perpetual idolatry, a supineness, and proneness, and incurvation of the soul to somewhat that deserves to be called an idol, i. e. either in St. Paul's acceptation of it, nothing—"an idol is nothing," or else, in the most honourable signification, only an image, or some rude likeness or representation of God. We are the image of God ourselves, and whatsoever is below us, is but an imperfect draught of Him, containing some lineaments, some confused resemblances of His power which created them, have no being of their own, but only as shadows which the light doth cast. And therefore every love, every bow, every cringe which we make to any creature, is the wooing and worshipping of an image at best, in plain terms of an idol, nothing. What degree then of idolatry have they attained to, who every minute of their lives bow down and worship, make it their trade and calling for ever

1 Cor. viii. 4.

[e] Wiggers in 1am secundæ, quæst. 1. art. 5. p. 27, 28.

to be a soliciting some pleasure or other! some exquisite piece of sensuality to bless and make them happy, which have no other shrines to set up, but only to their own lust, to which they do so crouch, and creep, and crawl, that they are never able to stand upright again: like those trees which the papists talk of, which by bowing to our Lady's house, when in walks by the wood toward Loretto, have ever since stood stooping. Thus do you see how the latter part of my text hath overtook the former: the walking after his own lusts becomes a scoffer, the licentious man proceeded atheist, and that with ease, his very voluptuous life is a kind of atheism; and the reasons of this are obvious, you need not seek or search far for them.

For first, this walking in their own lusts, notes an habit gathered out of many acts; he hath walked there a long while, and therefore now hath the skill of it, walks on confidently, and carelessly, without any rub or thought of stopping. And contrary to this, the worship of God, of which atheism is a privation, is an holy, religious habit of piety and obedience. Now we know two contrary habits cannot consist or be together in the same subject. An habit and its opposite privation are incompatible, light and darkness at the same time, though they may seem to meet sometimes as in twilight; but for two opposite positive habits, never any man's conceit was so bold or fantastical as to join them; you cannot imagine one, but you must remove the other. You may suppose a man distempered or weak, which is a privation of health, and yet suppose him pretty healthy, as long as his natural strength is able to overcome it; but can you suppose a man in a violent fever actually upon him, and yet still imagine him in perfect health? Thus is it with a sinner, who hath given himself over to the tyranny and impotency of his lusts, he hath utterly put off all degrees, all sparks of any habit of religion, according to that of our Saviour, "you cannot serve God and mammon," where mammon signifying in a vast extent the god of this world, imports all lusts, all earthly vanities, which any habituate sinner deifies.

[Mat. vi. 24.]

Secondly, every habit notes a delight, an acquiescence, and joy, in enjoying of that which through many actions, perhaps some brunts and rubs, he hath at last arrived to. Now this

delight and contentation, that it may be complete, is impatient of any other encumbrance, which at any time may come in to interrupt or disorder it. If any thing so happen, it is never quiet, till it have removed it. The scholar that hath all his life laboured, and at last attained to some habit of knowledge, and then resolves to enjoy the happiness and fruits of learning, in the quiet and rest of a perpetual contemplation, is impatient if any piece of ignorance cross or thwart him in his walk, he will to his books again, and never rest till he hath overcome and turned it out. Thus doth the sensual man, being come to the *ἀκμὴ*, and pitch, and entered into the paradise of his worldly joys, if he do but meet with any jar, if he feel any pluck or twinge from his conscience, any grudge or compunction of the spirit within him, any spark or heat, or warmth of religious fear in his breast, he will never rest till he hath abandoned it, he is impatient of such a qualm of godliness, he must needs put it over, he is sick at heart till he hath disgorged himself of this choler, and then returns securely godless to his walk, having banished God out of all his thoughts. Thus shall you see the atheist [Ps. x. 14.] on his humour, for want of some compunction at home, grumble at every godly man or action which they saw in the street. In the 2nd of Wisdom at the 14th; "He is Wisd. ii. grievous unto us to behold, he was made to reprove our 14. thoughts;" and they do not return to their content, they are not pleased again, till they have gotten him into their inquisition, to examine him with despitefulness and torture. Thus do they abhor, and stifle, and strangle every ver. 19. godly action in others, or motion in themselves, because the holiness of the one is an exprobation to their profaneness, and the other was a pang of conscience, made, as it were on purpose, by God to reprove their thoughts.

Thirdly, this walking in the text, though it be with some motion, yet it is a slow one, a kind of walking in one's sleep, or that of a melancholy man, that can walk till he be wet through, and not mark that it rained. I say, it notes here an heavy, drowsy, unactive habit, expressed by the Psalmist by sitting in a chair, as we shewed you; it notes a kind of churlish resoluteness, to walk on, whatever come in his way; he is grown even a passive to his lusts, he doth not so much act as suffer

them, he walks on snorting in his road; do what you can, you shall neither turn nor wake him. Now this slow, drowsy, unactive habit begets a kind of numbness in him, a sluggish, sullen stupidity over all his faculties, that even a spur or goad cannot rouse him; all the pores, as it were, and passages, and entries to the soul are so stopped and bunged up, all his affections are grown so gross and brawny, so hardened and incrassate, that no air or breath from heaven can pierce it. He that tells him of religion, or God, or virtue, is as he that waketh one from a sound sleep; he that telleth such a fool a tale of wisdom, speaketh to one in "a slumber, and when he hath told his tale, he will say, What is the matter?" Thus do you see; 1. the repugnance and inconsistence of a voluptuous life and religion; 2. the delight; 3. the stupidity of this habit; each of which have made a place for the libertine, and set him in the chair of the scorner. And all this while methinks I have but talked to your ears; now that your hearts and affections may partake of the sound, that the softer waxy part of you may receive some impression from this discourse, let us close all with an application.

Ecclus. xxii. 8.

And, first, from the guilt and dangerous condition of a licentious life, to labour by all means possible to keep out of it. He that is once engaged in it, goes on with a great deal of content, and in the midst of his pleasures on the one side, and carnal security on the other, his understanding, and will, and senses are lulled into a lethargy, nay, the very fancy in him is asleep, which in other sleeps is most active; he never imagines, never dreams of any fear or danger, either God or devil. Oh what a lamentable woeful estate is it to be thus sick beyond a sense of our disease, to be so near a spiritual death, and not so much as feel our weakness! Oh what an horrid thing it were to pass away in such a sleep, and never observe ourselves near death, till Satan hath arrested beyond bail, to sleep on and snort, as men without dread or danger, till the torments of hell should awake us! You cannot imagine how easy a thing it is for an habituate sinner to fall into the devil's paws before he thinks of it, as a melancholy man walking in the dark may be drowned in a pit, and no man hear him complain that he is fallen.

Again, we are wont to say that custom is another nature,

and those things which we have brought ourselves up to, we can as ill put off, as our constitution or disposition. Now those things which spring from the nature of any thing, are inseparable from the subject; banish them as oft as you will, *usque recurrent*[f], they will return again as to their home, they cannot subsist any where else, they dwell there. So wallowing in the mire being a condition natural to the swine, can never be extorted from them: wash them, rince them, purge them with hyssop, as soon as ever they meet with mire again, they will into it. Their swinish nature hath such an influence on them, that all care or art cannot forbid or hinder this effect of it. So that a customary sinner, who hath as it were made lust a part of his nature, hath incorporated profaneness, and grafted it into his affections, can as hardly be rid of it, as a subject of his property; it is possible for fear, or want of opportunity sometime to keep him in, and make him abstain: the loadstone may lie quiet, whilst no iron is within ken, or it may be held by force in its presence; but give it materials and leave to work, and it draws incontinently. So for all his temporary forbearance, upon some either policy or necessity, the habituate sinner hath not yet given over his habit. Leave him to himself, give him room and opportunity, and he will hold no longer. If he be once advanced to this pitch of sin to be walking after his own lusts, he may possibly be driven back with a storm or thunder; but he will hardly give over his walk, he will forward again as soon as ever the tempest is over. Nay farther, even when he wants objects and opportunities, he will yet shew his condition, he will betray the desire and good affection he bears to his old lusts; his discourse or fashions argue him incontinently bent, even when he is at the stanchest. As Aristotle[g] observes of the fearful man, that even when no formidable object is near, he falls into many frights: so the voluptuous man's fancy is perpetually possessed with the meditation of his own ways, when some disease or necessity will not let him walk. In brief, unless this second nature be quite taken out of him, and another holy spiritual nature created in its room, unless a stronger come and bind this devil and dispossess him of it, he hath small [Luke xi. 21.]

[f] [Hor. Epist. i. 10. 24.]

[g] [Arist. de Animâ, lib. i. c. 1.]

hopes of getting himself out of his dominion and tyranny; there is a great deal more stir in the converting of one customary sinner, than of a thousand others; it is not to be accomplished without a kind of death and resurrection, without a new creation of another nature. So that (if we should judge of God's actions by our own) the Spirit should seem to be put to more pains and trouble with this one habituate, than in the ordinary business of converting many a tamer sinner. This is enough by the desperateness of the cure to move you to study some art, some physic of prevention, lest when it is grown upon you, it be too late to enquire for remedies. How should we dare to entertain and naturalize such an evil spirit within us, which if ever he be ravished out of us again, cannot without tearing, and torturing, and rending even our whole nature in pieces! If we must needs be sinful, yet let us keep within a moderation, let us not so follow the devil's works, as to transubstantiate ourselves into his nature; let us not put off our manhood with our integrity, and though we cannot be saints, let us keep ourselves men. It is a degree of innocence not to be extremely wicked, and a piece of godliness not to be atheists. Our lust is an infinite thing, said a philosopher, (*ἀπέραντος ἐπιθυμία*, Jamblichus[h],) and he that walks after it hath an endless journey: there is no hope that he that hath so far to go, will ever have leisure to sit still. And therefore I say, if we must needs sin, yet let us not engage ourselves to sin for ever: if our being men lays a necessity of sinning on us, let our care to stay whilst it is possible for us, prove that we do not sin like devils, whose sin is their glory, and their resolution peremptory, never to give over sinning; and so may ours seem, and in all likelihood prove to be, if we give ourselves liberty to walk after our own lusts.

Secondly, if our lusts be such dangerous paths to walk in, and this in that very respect as they are our own in opposition to God's commands; if they are the straight direct way to atheism, nay atheism itself: then what care and circumspection is required at every setting down of our feet, at every entrance on any action, lest there be a serpent in the way, some piece of profaneness in every enterprise we enter

[h] [Jamblichus Protrept., c. xvii.]

on of ourselves! How ought we to fear, to suspect, and balk any way that is our own! For where it is atheism to walk, there surely it is a sin to tread: and where we have once ventured to tread, we shall be shrewdly tempted to walk; every step we have safely taken being an encouragement to a second. *Verebar omnia opera mea,* saith Job, "I feared all my works:" whatever action I could entitle myself to, methought there was some danger in it, I was afraid it was not right as it should be, I should never be able to justify it. This is an excellent trial of all our serious deliberate actions, to mark whether they are our own or no, whether we went about them on our own heads, without our warrant or directions from God: if we did, it is much to be doubted there is some poison, some guilt in them, something that deserves to be feared, and fled from. This very suspecting of our own ways, will alien us from our own lusts, will bend us nearer to God, and never suffer us to dare to venture where He hath not secured us; will join us as it were in an engine to God Himself, where the lower wheels never begin to move without the example and government of the higher. If you can but persuade yourself to fear your own ways, it will be a good stop of your progress to atheism. I am confident the devil will never get you to walk in your own lusts. [Job ix. 28. Vulg.]

Thirdly, if walking in our own lusts be direct atheism, what shall we think of them who make it a piece of religion and holy policy to do so? Beloved, there be some learned catechised atheists, who upon confidence of an absolute eternal predestination of every man in the world that shall ever possibly be saved, set up their rest there, and expect what God will do with them. It is to no purpose to hope God will alter the decree; they are resolved to leave all to God, and if they perish, they perish. Mark with me, is not this a religious atheism to attribute so much to God as to become careless of Him, so to depend as never to think on Him, and by granting His decree in our understanding, to deny His Godhead in our conversation? He that lives negligently on confidence that his care may be spared, that if there be any salvation for him, God will work it out without his fear or trembling: he that believes God's election so absolute,

that himself hath nothing to do in the business; whilst he expects mercy, makes himself uncapable of it; and though he acknowledge a resurrection, lives as though he looked to be annihilated. Certainly he that expects God should send him a fruitful harvest, will himself manure the ground; he that hopes will labour; according to that, 1 John iii. 3, "He that hath this hope in him purifies himself," &c. So that whosoever relies on God for salvation, and in the midst of his hopes stands idle, and walks after his own lusts, by his very actions confutes his thoughts, and will not in a manner suffer God to have elected him, by going on in such reprobate courses.

1 John iii. 3.

Lastly, if it be this confident walking after our own lusts, which is here the expression of atheism, then here is a comfort for some fearful sinners, who finding themselves not yet taken up quite from a licentious life, suspect, and would be in danger to despair of themselves as atheists. It is a blessed tenderness to feel every sin in ourselves at the greatest advantage; to aggravate and represent it to our conscience in the horridest shape; but there is a care also to be had, that we give not ourselves over as desperate; Cain lied when he said his sin was greater than could be either borne or forgiven. When the physicians have given one over, *αἱ φύσεις ἰατροὶ νούσων*[1], nature hath its spring and plunge, and sometimes quits and overcomes the disease. If thou art in this dangerous walk, and strivest and heavest, and canst not get out of it, yet sorrow not as one without hope: this very regret and reluctancy, this striving and plunging is a good symptom. If thou wilt continue with a good courage, and set thyself to it to the purpose, be confident thou shalt overcome the difficulty. If this sin be a walking, then every stop is a cessation, every check a degree to integrity, every godly thought or desire a pawn from God that He will give thee strength to victory: and if thou do but nourish and cherish every such reluctancy, every such gracious motion in thyself, thou mayest with courage expect a gracious calm deliverance out of these storms and tempests. And let us all labour, and endeavour, and pray that we may be loosed from these toils and gins, and engagements of our

[Gen. iv. 13.]

[1] Joan. Philoponus, i. de Anima.

own lusts, and being entered into a more religious severe course here, than the atheism of our ways would counsel us to, we may obtain the end, and rest, and consummation, and reward of our course hereafter.

Now to Him which hath elected us, &c.

SERMON XXX.

1 Tim. i. 15.

Of whom I am the chief.

The chief business of our Apostle St. Paul in all his Epistles is, what the main of every preacher ought to be, exhortation. There is not one doctrinal point but contains a precept to our understanding to believe it, nor moral discourse, but effectually implies an admonishment to our wills to practise it. Now these exhortations are proposed either vulgarly in the downright garb of precept, as, "These things command and teach," &c., or in a more artificial, obscure, enforcing way of rhetoric, as, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ, whereby the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world;" which though in words it seems a protestation of St. Paul's own resolution, yet in effect is a most powerful exhortatory to every succeeding Christian to glory only in the cross of Christ, and on it to crucify both the world and himself. This method of reducing St. Paul to exhortation I observe to you for the clearing of my text. For this whole verse at the first view seems only a mere thesis or point of belief, that Christ came into the world to save sinners, illustrated and applied by the speaker as one, and the chief of the number of those sinners to be saved. But it contains a most rhetorical powerful exhortation to both understanding and will; to believe this faithful saying, "that Christ came," &c. and to accept, lay hold of, and with all our might to embrace and apply to each of ourselves this great mercy, toward this great salvation bestowed on sinners who can with humility confess their sins, and with faith lay hold on the promise. And this is the business of the verse,

1 Tim. iv. 11.

Gal. vi. 14.

and the plain matter of this obscure double exhortation to every man's understanding, that he believe "that Christ," &c.; to every man's affections, that he humble himself, and teach his heart, and that his tongue, to confess, Of all sinners, &c. This text shall not be divided into parts—which were to disorder and distract the significancy of a proposition—but into several considerations; for so it is to be conceived either absolutely as a profession of St. Paul of himself; and there we will enquire whether and how Paul was the chief of all sinners: secondly, respectively to us, for whom this form of confessing the state, and applying the salvation of sinners to ourselves is set down.

And first, whether and how Paul was the chief of all sinners; where we are to read him in a double estate, converted and unconverted, expressed to us by his double name Paul and Saul, Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ, Saul a persecutor, mad against the Christians; and that both these estates may be contained in the text, although penned by Paul regenerated, may appear, in that the pronoun ἐγὼ, I, signifying the whole complete person of Paul, restrains not the speech to his present being only, but considers also what he had been; more especially set down at the thirteenth verse, "who was [ver. 13.] before a blasphemer," &c. So then Paul in his Saul-ship being a blasphemer, a persecutor and injurious, and in sum, a most violent, perverse, malicious unbeliever, was a chief sinner, ranked in the front of the devil's army; and this needs no further proof or illustration. Yet seeing that that age of the world had brought forth many other of the same strain of violent unbelief, nothing inferior to Saul, as may appear by those many that were guilty of Christ's death (as Saul in person was not), and those that so madly stoned St. Stephen whilst Saul only "kept the witnesses' Acts vii. 58. clothes," and as the text speaks, "was consenting unto his viii. 1. death;" seeing, I say, that others of that age equalled, if not exceeded Saul's guilt, how can he be said above all other sinners to be the chief? I think we shall not wrest or enlarge the text beside or beyond the meaning of the Holy Ghost or Apostle, if in answer unto this we say that there is intended not so much the greatness of his sins above all sinners in the world, but the greatness of the miracle in

converting so great a sinner into so great a saint and Apostle. So that the words shall run, Of all sinners that Christ came into the world to save, and then prefer to such an eminence, I am the chief, or as the word primarily signifies, πρῶτος εἰμὶ, I am the first, i. e. Paul was the chief of all converts, and Paul was the first that from so great a persecutor of Christ was changed into so great, so glorious an Apostle. For so it follows in the verses next after my text, "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Christ Jesus might shew forth all long-suffering," &c. The issue of all is this, that Saul unconverted was a very great sinner, yet not the greatest of sinners absolutely, but for aught we read in the New Testament, the greatest and first that was called from such a degree of infidelity, a blasphemer, a persecutor, to so high a pitch of salvation, a saint, an Apostle, yea, and greater than an Apostle; whence the observation is, that though Saul were, yet every blasphemous sinner cannot expect to be called from the depth of sin to regeneracy and salvation. Although Saul being πρῶτος ἁμαρτωλῶν, "the chief of sinners," was called and saved; yet Saul was also in another sense, for aught we read, πρῶτος, and perhaps the last that from so great a riot of sin obtained so great salvation. Wherefore, O sinner, be not presumptuous from Paul's example, but from Paul's single example begin to suspect thy state, and fear that such a miracle of salvation shall not be afforded thee. There hath been an opinion of late revived, perhaps original among the Romans, that the greatest sinner is the more likely object of God's mercy, or subject of His grace, than the mere moral man, whom either natural fear, or the like, not spiritual respects, hath restrained from those outrages of sin. The being of this opinion in the primitive Romans, and the falseness of it, is sufficiently proved by that expostulation of St. Paul,

Rom. vi. 1. "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid," in answer to some, who, hearing that Christ came into the world to save sinners, thought that the excess of sin was the best qualification and only motive to provoke and deserve a more abundant grace and certain salvation. As if that Spirit which once, to manifest its power, called Saul, in the midst of his madness breathing out threatenings

and slaughters against the Church, would not call any but those who had prepared themselves by the same degree of madness; but required that men should make themselves almost devils that they might be called into Christians; as if that God which could out of stones, could not also out of men raise up children unto Abraham; as if that Christ which raised up Lazarus, being dead four days, and as they thought stinking in his grave, could not as easily have healed him whilst he was yet alive: whereas we read that Christ dealt more on the cures of the impotent than resurrections of the dead; that is, in a spiritual application, healed more from the bed of languishment of their weaknesses and diseases, than He raised out of the graves of trespasses and sins; though some also hath He out of death quickened, to exalt the power and miracle of His mercy. Yet hath not this doctrine too been most confidently maintained among some of our times? That there is more hope of the debauched man, that he shall be called or saved, than of the mere moral, honest man, who yet is in the state of unregeneracy. Have not some men, defining this moral man by the formal hypocrite, set him in the greatest opposition to heaven? As if that degree of innocence, or rather not being extremely sinful, which a moral care of our ways may bestow on us, were a greater hindrance than promotion toward the state of grace, and the natural man were so much the further from God, the nearer he were to goodness, and no man could hope to come to heaven but he that had knocked at hell gates. I confess indeed that the Holy Ghost, where He means to inhabit, hath no need of pains to prepare Him a room, but can at His first knock open and cleanse, adorn and beautify the most uncouth, ugly, and unsavoury heart in the world. That omnipotent convincing Spirit can at the same instant strike the most obdurate heart, and soften it, and where it once enters cannot be repulsed by the most sturdy habituate sin or devil. I confess likewise, that some have been thus rather snatched than called, like the firebrands out of the fire, and by an ecstasy of the Spirit inwardly in a minute changed from incarnate devils into incarnate saints. So was Mary dispossessed of seven devils, who was after so highly promoted in Christ's favour, that

[Mat. iii. 9.]

[John xi. 39.]

[Luke viii. 2.]

Mark xvi. 9. [Luke viii. 27 sqq.] she had the honour to be the first witness of the resurrection. So that Gadarene who had entrenched and fortified himself among the tombs, and was garrisoned with an army of devils, so that he brake fetters and chains, and could not be tamed or kept in any compass, yet in a minute at Christ's word sent forth a legion of fiends sufficient to people and destroy a colony of swine. And so was Paul in my text, in a minute at Christ's call delivered of a multitude of blasphemous malicious spirits, and straight became the joy of angels, the Apostle of the Gentiles. Yet meantime, these miraculous but rarer examples must not prescribe and set up, must not become a rule and encourage any one to Saul's madness on confidence of Paul's conversion, to a more impetuous course of sinning, that he may become a more glorious saint. It is a wrong way to heaven to dig into the deep, and a brutish arrogance to hope that God will the more eagerly woo us, the further our sins have divorced us from Him. If some, as hath been said, have been caught or strucken in the height of their rebellions, or in the fulness of the evil spirit called to a wane,—as diseases in the ἀκμὴ, or top-pitch, are wont to decay and weaken into health again,—if there have been some of these, as my Apostle, raised from the depth of sin, as Lazarus from the stench of the grave, yet these in respect of others more softly and ordinarily called, are found few in number; and such as were appointed for the miracles as well as the objects of God's mercy. Hence it is that a strange disorder hath most times accompanied this extraordinary conversion of more violent outrageous sinners. Our Apostle—to go no further—was to be cast into a trance, and his regeneration not to be accomplished without a kind of death and resurrection, whereas others who are better morally qualified, or rather are less hardened in the sins of unregeneracy, do answer at the softest knock or whisperingest call of the Spirit, and at His beckon will come after Him. More might be said of this point, how St. Paul was most notably converted; that he had the alleviation of ignorance, for which cause, as he [1 Tim. i. 13.] says himself, he found mercy, and that others are not probably to expect the like miracle, who have not those insuperable prepossessions from custom and religion; but that this

is not the business of the text, but a *præcognoscendum* or passage to the clearing of it. Briefly therefore to conclude this note, Paul is the chief example mentioned in Scripture, and there be not many, though some more, that were called from the height of impiety, from the gall of bitterness, to this mystical third heaven, or so high degree of saint and apostle. The more ordinary course of God's proceeding—if we may possibly judge of the decree by events and examples—is to call such to the state of grace, and so consequently of glory, who have passed their unregeneracy most innocently, and kept themselves least polluted from the stains of habituate wickedness, that is, have lived as much as natural men can do, in the plainest, honestest course of morality, it being presupposed that among all other moral virtues they have purchased humility, the best—if there be any preparative—for the receiving of grace. Meanwhile we are not to be mistaken, as if we thought God's purposes tied to man's good behaviour, or man's moral goodness to woo and allure God's Spirit, as that the Almighty is not equally able to sanctify the foulest soul by His converting grace, and the less polluted; or that He requires man's preparation: but our position is, that in ordinary charitable reason we ought to judge more comfortably, and hope more confidently of a mere moral man naturally more careful of his ways, that he shall be both called and saved, that God will with His Spirit perfect and crown his morally good, though imperfect endeavours, than of another more debauched sinner utterly negligent of the commands of either God or nature. Which position I have in brief proved, though nothing so largely as I might, in confutation of them who do utterly condemn unregenerate morality, and deject it below the lowest degree of profaneness, as if they would teach a man his way to heaven by boasting arrogantly, what Paul converted confesses humbly, I am the nearer to Christ's salvation, because of all sinners I am the chief. The use in brief of this thesis shall be for those who not as yet find the power of the regenerating Spirit in them,—for I am to fear many of my auditors may be in this case, and I pray God they feel, and work, and pray themselves out of it,—the use, I say, is for those who are not yet full possessors of the Spirit,

to labour to keep their unregeneracy spotless from the greater offence, that if they are not yet called to the preferment of converts and saints, the second part of heaven, that earthly city of God, that yet they will live orderly in that lower regiment, wherein they yet remain, and be subject to the law of nature, till it shall please God to take them into a new commonwealth under the law of grace, to improve their natural abilities to the height, and bind their hands and hearts from the practice and study of outrageous sins by those ordinary restraints which nature will afford us; such as are a good disposition, education, and the like; not to leave and refer all to the miraculous working of God, and to increase our sins for the magnifying of the virtue in recalling us. God requires not this glory at our hands that we should peremptorily over-damn ourselves, that He may be the more honoured in saving us. His mercy is more known to the world than to need this woeful foil to illustrate it. God is not wont to rake hell for converts, to gather devils to make saints of; the kingdom of heaven would suffer great violence, if only such should take it. If Saul were infinitely sinful before he proved an Apostle,—though by the way we hear him profess he had lived in all good conscience,—yet expect not thou the same miracle, nor think that the excess of sins is the cue that God ordinarily takes to convert us. The fathers in an obedience to the discipline and pedagogy of the old law, possessed their souls in patience, expecting the prophesied approach of the new—did not by a contempt of Moses precipitate and hasten the coming of the Messias. Cornelius lived a long while devoutly, and gave much alms, till at last God called him, and put him in a course to become a Christian: and do thou, if thou art not yet called, wait the Lord's leisure in a sober moral conversation, and fright not Him from thee with unnatural abominations. God is not likely to be wooed by those courses which nature loathes, or to accept them whom the world is ashamed of. In brief, remember Saul and Cornelius; Saul, that he, not many, were called from a professed blasphemer; Cornelius, that before he was called he prayed to God alway; and do thou endeavour to deserve the like mercy, and then in thy prayer confess thine undeserv-

Acts xxiii. 1.

Acts x. 2.

ing, and petition grace, as grace, that is not as our merit, but as His free-will favour, not as the desert of our morality, but a stream from the bounty of His mercy, who—we may hope—will crown His common graces with the fulness of His Spirit. And now, O powerful God, on those of us which are yet unregenerate, bestow Thy restraining grace, which may curb and stop our natural inordinacy, and by a sober, careful, continent life, prepare us to a better capability of Thy sanctifying Spirit, wherewith in good time Thou shalt establish and seal us up to the day of redemption. And thus much concerning Saul unconverted, how of all sinners he was the chief, not absolutely, that he surpassed the whole world in rankness of sin, but respectively to his later state, that few or none are read to have been translated from such a pitch of sin to saintship. Now follows the second consideration of him being proceeded Paul, i. e. converted, and then the question is, whether and how Paul converted may be said the chief of all sinners. [Eph. iv. 30.]

It were too speculative a depth for a popular sermon to discuss the inherence and condition of sin in the regenerate; the business will be brought home more profitably to our practice if we drive it to this issue, that Paul in this place, intending by his own example to direct others how to believe the truth, and embrace and fasten on the efficacy of Christ's incarnation, hath no better motive to incite himself and others toward it, than a recognition of his sins, that is, a survey of the power of sin in him before, and a sense of the relics of sin in him since his conversion. Whence the note is, that the greatness of one's sins makes the regenerate man apply himself more fiercely to Christ. This faithful saying was therefore to Paul worthy of all acceptation, because of all sinners he was the chief. St. Paul, as every regenerate man, is to be observed in a treble posture, either casting his eyes backward, or calling them in upon himself, or else looking forward and aloof; and accordingly is to be conceived in a treble meditation, either of his life past, or present state, or future hopes. In the first posture and meditation you may see, first, Paul alone, who was before a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious; secondly, all the regenerate together. "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin did work [Rom. vii. 5.]

in our members," &c., and many the like. In the second posture and meditation you may observe him retracting an error, deprecating a temptation with earnest and repeated intercessions, fighting with and harassing himself, "beating down his body, and keeping it in subjection, lest while he preached to others he himself might be a cast-away." In the third posture we find him, where after a long disguise he cries out, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." And again most evidently, "Forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching out to those things which are before, I press toward the mark," &c., like a racer in the heat of his course whose eyes desire to anticipate his feet, and enjoy the goal before he reach it. These three carriages of the regenerate man fully prove our observation: for if either of the two former sights could afford any content; if either his former or present state did not sufficiently terrify him, he would not be so eager on the third, it being the folly of human pride and self-love to contemn any foreign aid as long as it finds either appearance or hope of domestic. If in the view of his former life he should find any thing either good, or not extremely bad and sinful, he would under-prize the mercy of that Saviour that redeemed him from so poor a guilt; if he could observe in his present state any natural firmness or stability, any inherent purity, any essential justice, he might possibly sacrifice to his own nets, and reckoning himself in perfect peace with God, neither invoke and seek, nor acknowledge a Mediator. But when in his former life he shall find nothing but the matter and cause of horror and amazement, nothing but hideous, ghastly affrightments, yea, and a body of damnation: when in hope to mend himself, and ease his fears, he shall fly to the comfort of his present converted state, and yet there also espy many thorns of temptations, how can he but be frighted out of himself? How can he but fly from the scene of those his torments, and seek out and importune the mercy of a Saviour, which may deliver him out of all his fears? After the example of our Apostle in my text, where he does more peremptorily apprehend Christ, and more bodily believe, "that He came into the world to save sinners, because of all sinners he was chief," making his own sinfulness—being the object and ex-

Acts xxiii. [5.]
2 Cor. xii. 7.
1 Cor. ix. 27.
Rom. vii. 25.
Phil. iii. 13.
[Hab. i. 16.]
2 Cor. xii. 7.

ternal motive of God's mercy—an argument and internal motive of his own faith and confidence. The plain meaning of this thesis is that among men things are not alway valued according to the merit of their nature, for then each commodity should be equally prized by all men, and the man in health should bestow as much charges on physic as the diseased: but each thing bears its several estimation by its usefulness, and the riches of every merchandize is increased accordingly as men to whom it is proffered do either use or want it. Moreover, this usefulness is not to be reckoned of according to truth, but opinion, not according to men's real wants, but according to the sense which they have of their wants; so a man distracted, because he hath not so much reason about him as to observe his disease, will contemn hellebore, or any other the most precious recipe for this cure: and generally no man will hasten to the physician, or justly value his art and drugs, but he whom misery hath taught the use of them. So then unless a man have been in some spiritual danger, and by the converting Spirit be instructed into a sense and apprehension of it, he will not sufficiently observe the benefit and use of a deliverer: unless he feels in himself some stings of the relics of his sin, some pricks of the remaining Amorite, he will not take notice of the want and necessity which he hath of Christ's mediation. But when he shall with a tenderness of memory survey the guilt of his former state, from the imputation, not importunity whereof he is now justified, when he shall still feel within him "the buffetings of Satan," and sensibly observe himself not fully sanctified, then, and not before, will he with a zealous earnestness apprehend the profit, yea, necessity of a Saviour, whose assistance so nearly concerns him. The second ground of this position is that an extraordinary undeserved deliverance is by an afflicted man received with some suspicion: the consideration of the greatness of the benefit makes him doubt of the truth of it, and he will scarce believe so important an happiness befallen him, because his misery could neither expect nor hope it. Hence upon the first notice of it he desires to ascertain it unto his sense, by a sudden possession of it, and not at all to defer the enjoying of that mercy which his former misery made infinitely "worthy

[2 Cor. xii. 7.]

of all acceptation." Thus may you see a shipwrecked man recovered to some refuge, cling about, and almost incorporate himself unto it, because the fortune of his life depends on that succour. The new regenerate man finding in the Scripture the promise of a Redeemer, which shall free him from those engagements which his former bankrupt estate had plunged him in, cannot delay so great an happiness, but with a kind of tender fear and filial trembling, runs and strives, (as
Mat. xx. 4. the disciples to the sepulchre), to assure his necessitous soul of this acceptable salvation: even sets upon his Saviour with a kind of violence, and will seem to distrust His promise, till His seal shall authorize and confirm it. Thus did the greatness of the work of the unexpected resurrection beget in
John xx. 25. Thomas a suspicion and incredulity, "I will not believe," &c., where our charity may conjecture, that he above all the rest was not absolutely resolved not to believe the resurrection, but that he being absent at the first apparition, would not take so important a miracle upon trust, but desired to have that demonstrated to his sense, which did so nearly concern his faith; that so by putting his finger into the print of the nails, and thrusting his hand into His side, he might almost consubstantiate and unite himself unto his Saviour, and at once be assured of the truth, and partake of the profit of the resurrection. Hear but the voice of the spouse, and any further proofs shall be superfluous, where in violence and jealousy of love she importunes the eternal presence of the
Cant. viii. 6. Beloved, "Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy as cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire which hath a vehement flame." She had before often lost her beloved, which made her so fiercely fasten on him, for having roused him, *ruit in amplexus*,
Cant. iii. 4. she rushed into his embraces, she held him and would not let him go. Thus you see the jealousy and eagerness of love produced by either a former loss, or present more than ordinary want of the object, both which how pertinent they are to the regenerate man, either observing his past sins, or instant temptations, this discourse hath already made manifest.

The use of this thesis (to wit, that the greatness of one's sins makes the regenerate man apply himself more fiercely to Christ) is first, by way of caution, that we mistake not

a motive for an efficient, an impulsive for a principal cause. For where we say, 'it makes him apply himself,' &c., we mean not that the increase of sin produces faith formally, but only inciteth to believe by way of instruction, by shewing us what distress we are in, and consequently in what a necessity of a deliverer. The meditation of our sinful courses may disclose our misery, not redress it; may explore, not mend a sinner, like a touchstone to try, not any way to alter him. It is the controlling Spirit which must effectually renew our spirits, and lead us to the Christ which our sins told us we had need of. The sense of sin may rouse the soul, but it is the Spirit of God that lays the toils; the feeling of our guilt may beat the waters, but it is the great fisher of our souls which spreads the nets, which entraps us as we are on our way to hell, and leads us captive to salvation. The mere gripings of our conscience being not produced by any pharmacon of the Spirit, but by some distemper arising from sin, what anxiety doth it cause within us! what pangs and twinges to the soul! O Lord, do Thou regenerate us, and then Thy Holy Spirit shall sanctify even our sins unto our good; and if Thy grace may lead us, our sins shall pursue and drive us unto Christ! Secondly, by way of character, how to distinguish a true convert from a false. A man which from an inveterate desperate malady shall meet with a miraculous unexpected cure, will naturally have some art of expression above an ordinary joy; you shall see him in an ecstacy of thanksgiving and exultancy, whilst another, which was never in that distress, quietly enjoys the same health, and gives thanks softly by himself to his preserver. So is it in the distresses of the soul, which if they have been excessive, and almost beyond hope of recovery, as the miracle must, so will the expression of this deliverance be somewhat extraordinary. The soul which from a good moral or less sinful natural estate, is *magis immutata quam genita*, rather changed than regenerate into a spiritual, goes through this business without any great noise, the Spirit entering into it in a still small voice, or at a breathing: but when a robust- John xx.
ous obdurate sinner shall be rather apprehended than called, 22.
when the sea shall be commanded to give up his shipwrecked, and the sepulchre to restore her dead, the soul

surely which thus escapeth shall not be content with a mean expression, but will practise all the halleluiahs and magnificats which the triumphant liturgies of the saints can afford it. Wherefore, I say, if any one, out of a full violent course of sinning conceive himself converted and regenerated, let him examine what a degree of spiritual exultancy he hath attained to, and if he find it but mean, and slight, and perfunctory, let him somewhat suspect, that he may the more confirm the evidence of his calling. Now this spiritual exultancy of the regenerate consists both in a solemn humiliation of himself, and a spiritual rejoicing in God his Saviour; both expressed in Mary's Magnificat, where she specifies in the midst of her joy "the lowliness of His handmaid," and in St. Paul's victory-song over death. So that if the conversion of an inordinate sinner be not accompanied with unwonted joy and sorrow, with a godly sense of his past distress, and a godly triumph for his delivery; if it be not followed with a violent eagerness to fasten on Christ; finally, if there be not somewhat above ordinary in the expression, then I counsel not to distrust, but fear, that is, with a solicitous, not suspicious trembling, to labour to "make thy calling and election sure:" to pray to that Holy Spirit to strike our hearts with a measure of holy joy and holy sorrow, some way proportionable to the size of those sins, which in our unregeneracy reigned in us; and for those of us whom our sins have separated far from Him, but His grace hath called home to Him, that He will not suffer us to be content with a distance, but draw us close unto Himself, make us "press toward the mark," and fasten ourselves on that Saviour, which hath redeemed us from the body and guilt of this so great death. The third use is, of comfort and confirmation to some tender souls who are incorporate into Christ, yet finding not in themselves that excessive measure of humiliation which they observe in others, suspect their own state, and infinitely grieve that they can grieve no more. Whereas this doctrine being observed will be an allay to their sorrow, and wipe some unnecessary tears from their eyes. For if the greatness of sin past, or the plentiful relics of sin remaining, do require so great a measure of sorrow, to expiate the one, and subdue the other; if it be a deliverance from an habituate servitude

[Luke i. 48.]
[1 Cor. xv. 55—57.]
[2 Pet. i. 10.]
[Philipp. iii. 14.]
[Rom. vii. 24.]

to all manner of sin, which provokes this extraordinary pains of expression; then certainly they who have been brought up with the Spirit, which were from their baptism never wholly deprived of it, need not to be bound over to this trade of sorrow, need not to be set apart to that perpetual humiliation which a more stubborn sin or devil is wont to be cast out by. I doubt not but a soul educated in familiarity with the Spirit, may at once enjoy herself and it; and so that if it have an humble conceit of itself, and a filial of God, may in earth possess God with some clearness of look, some serenity of affections, some alacrity of heart, and tranquillity of spirit. God delights not in the torment of His children, (though some are so to be humbled,) yea, He delights not in such burnt offerings as they bestow upon Him, who destroy, and consume, and sacrifice themselves; but "the Lord's delight is in them that fear Him" filially, "and put their trust," i. e. assurance, confidence, "in His mercy;" in them that rejoice, that make their service a pleasure, not an affliction, and thereby possess heaven before they come to it. It is observed in husbandry that soil, laid on hard, barren, starved ground doth improve it, and at once deface and enrich it, which yet in ground naturally fruitful, and kept in heart, and good case, is esteemed unnecessary and burthensome. You need not the application. Again, the husbandman can mend a dry, stubborn, wayward, fruitless earth, by overflowing of it, and on such indeed is his ordinary requisite discipline, to punish it for its amendment. But there is a ground otherwise well tempered, which they call a weeping ground, whence continually water soaks out, and this proves seldom fruitful (if our learned husbandmen observe aright), whereof there is sometime need of draining, as well as watering. The application is that your soul, which either hath been naturally dry and barren, or else overwrought in the business of the world, needs a flood of tears to soften and purge it. But the well-tempered soul, which hath never been out of heart, but hath always had some inward life, some fatness of, and nourishment from the Spirit, is rather oppressed than improved by such an overflow. The Christian is thereby much hindered in his progress of good works, and cannot serve the Lord with alacrity, that so perpetually hangs

[Psalm cxlvii. 11.]

down his head like a bulrush. Wherefore, the country rule is, that that ground is best which is mellow, which being crushed will break but not crumble, dissolve, but not excessively. Hence, I say, the habituate believer need not suspect his estate, if he find not in himself such an extremity of violent grief and humiliation as he observes in others; knowing that in him such a measure of tears would both soil the face of his devotion, and clog the exercise of it. His best mediocrity will be to be habitually humbled, but actually lively and alacrious in the ways of godliness; not to be too rigid and severe a tyrant over his soul, but to keep it in a temper of Christian softness, tender under the hand of God, and yet man-like and able both in the performance of God's worship and his own calling. And whensoever we shall find ourselves in either extreme, either too much hardened or too much melted, too much elevated or too much dejected, then to pray to that Holy Spirit so to fashion the temper of our souls, that we neither fail in humbling ourselves in some measure for our sins, nor yet too cowardly deject and cast down ourselves, below the courage, and comfort, and spiritual rejoicing which He hath prescribed us. "O Holy Lord, we are the greatest of sinners, and therefore we humble ourselves before Thee, but Thou hast sent Thy Christ into the world to save sinners, and therefore we raise up our spirits again, and praise and magnify Thy Name." And thus much of this point, and in brief, of the first consideration of these words, to wit, as they are absolutely a profession of Paul himself, to which end we beheld him in his double estate, converted and unconverted. In his unconverted state we found, though a very great sinner, yet not absolutely greater than those times brought forth, and therefore we were to think of him relatively to his future estate, and so we found him the greatest sinner that ever was called in the New Testament into so glorious a saint. Whence we observe the rarity of such conversions, that though Saul were, yet every blasphemous sinner could not expect to be called from the depth of sin to regeneracy and salvation: and this we proved both against the ancient Romans and modern censors of morality, and applied it to the care which we ought to have of keeping our unregeneracy spotless from any reigning sin. Afterward we came

to Paul converted, where we balked the discourse of the condition of sin in the regenerate, and rather observed the effect of it; and in it, that the greatness of his sin made (as Paul, so) every regenerate man more eagerly to fasten on Christ. Which being proved by a double ground, we applied first, by way of caution, how that proposition was to be understood; 2. by way of character, how a great sinner may judge of his sincere certain conversion; 3. by way of comfort to others, who find not the effects of humiliation and the like in themselves, in such measure as they see in others; and so we have passed through the first consideration of these words, being conceived absolutely as St. Paul's profession of himself, we should come to the other consideration, as they are set down to us as a pattern or form of confessing the estate, and applying the salvation of sinners to ourselves, which business requiring the pains, and being worthy the expense of an entire hour, we must defer to a second exercise.

Now the God which hath created us, hath elected, redeemed, called, justified us, will sanctify us in His time, will prosper this His ordinance, will direct us by His grace to His glory. To Him be ascribed due the honour, the praise, the glory, the dominion, which through all ages of the world have been given to Him that sitteth on the throne, to the Holy Spirit, and Lamb for evermore.

SERMON XXXI.

1 Tim. i. 15.

Of whom I am the chief.

In all human writings and learning, there is a kind of poverty and emptiness, which makes them when they are beheld by a judicious reader look starved and crest-fallen: their speeches are rather puffed up than filled, they have a kind of boasting and ostentation in them, and promise more substance and matter to the ear, than they are able to perform really to the understanding: whence it falls out, that we are more affected with them at the first hearing, and, if the orator be clear in his expression, we understand as much at the first recital, as we are able to do at the hundredth repetition. But there is a kind of excellency in the Scripture, a kind of ὕψος, or sublimity above all other writings in the world. The reading of every section of it leaves a sting in the mind, and a perpetual conceit of a still imperfect understanding of it. An intelligent man at every view finds in it a fresh mystery, and still perceives that there is somewhat beyond, not yet attained to: like men digging in mines, the deeper he dives he finds the greatest treasure, and meets with that under ground, which looking on the outward turf, or surface, he never imagined to have been there. This I observe unto you, to shew you the riches both of all, and especially of this Scripture, whereinto the deeper I dig, the more ore I find: and having already bestowed one hour in the discussing of it, without any violence, or wresting, or wire-drawing, find plenty of new materials.

We have already handled the words at large in one consideration, as they are a profession of Paul himself; I will not repeat you the particular occurrents. We now without any more delay of preface come to the second consideration of

them, as they are spoken by Paul respectively to us, i. e. as they are prescribed us for a form of confessing the estate, and applying the salvation of sinners unto ourselves, teaching each of us for a close of our faith and devotion to confess, "Of all," &c.

Where first, the cadence or manner how Paul falls into these words, is worthy to be both observed and imitated: the chief and whole business of this verse being the truth, the acceptable truth, of Christ's Incarnation, with the end of it, the saving of sinners. He can no sooner name this word sinners, but his exceeding melting tenderness abruptly falls off, and subsumes, "Of all sinners," &c. 'If there be any thing that concerns sinners, I am sure I have my part in that, for of that number I am the chief.' The note by the way briefly is, that "a tender conscience never hears of the name of sinner, but straight applies it to itself." It is noted by Aristotle[a], the master of human learning, that that rhetoric was very thin and unprofitable, very poor and like to do little good upon men's affections, which insisted on general matters, and descended not to particulars, as if one should discourse of sin in general and sinners, without reference to this or that particular sin or sinner; and the reason of his note was, because men are not moved or stirred with this eloquence. The intemperate person could hear a declamation against vice, and never be affected with it, unless it stooped to take notice of his particular enormities; and so is it with other criminals. This reason of his was grounded upon the obdurateness of men's hearts, which would think that nothing concerned them, but what was framed against the individual offender, all such being as dull and unapt to understand any thing that being applied might move or prick them, as men are to take notice of a common national judgment, which we never duly weigh, till we smart under it in particular. This senselessness may also seem to have been amongst St. Paul's Corinthians, which made him use Aristotle's counsel in driving his speech home to their private persons. Where telling them that neither fornicators nor idolaters, and the like, shall inherit the kingdom of God; for fear they should not be so tender conscienced as of their own accords to apply [1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.]

[a] [Rhetoric., lib. ii. c. 22.]

these sins to themselves, and read themselves guilty in that glass; he is fain to supply that office, and plainly tell them what otherwise perhaps they would not have conceived, "and such were some of you." This senseless hard-heartedness or backwardness in applying the either commands or threatenings of the law to one's self, is by the Apostle called, *νοῦς ἀδόκιμος*, which we ordinarily translate a reprobate mind, but may be brought to signify, a mind without judgment, that hath no faculty of discerning, that cannot in a general threatening observe something that may concern the danger of his particular state: or, as it may be rendered, a mind without sense, not apprehensive of those things which are manifestly proposed to them, like those walking idols described by the Psalmist, "Eyes have they and see not, ears and hear not, noses and smell not," only beautiful carcasses of Christians, which have nothing but their shape and motion to persuade you that they live: unless we add this most unhappy symptom, which indicates a state more wretched far than death itself, that there is strength and vigour to oppose recovery, that amidst death there yet survives a hatred and antipathy to life. In such a soul as this there is a perpetual reaction, and impatience of the presence of any thing which may trash, encumber, or oppress it: a judgment or denunciation is but cast away upon it, it shall be sure to return unprofitably, and neither move nor mend it. This hath been, and much more might be observed to you, of the carriage of the hard, stupid heart toward either Scripture or preacher, to the plain opening of this point; for you shall more clearly understand the tender heart by observing the obdurate, and learn to be affected aright with God's law or punishments, by knowing and hating the opposite stubborn senselessness. Now in brief, this tender heart in the discovery of a sin, or denunciation of a judgment needs not a particular, "Thou art the man," to bring it home to his person. The more wide and general the proposal is, the more directly and effectually is this strucken with it. In a common satire, or declamation against sin in general, it hath a sudden art of logic to anatomize and branch this sin in general into all its parts; and then to lay each of them to its own charge; it hath a skill of making every passage in the Scripture a

ver. 11.

[Rom. i. 28.]

[Ps. cxv. 5, 6.]

glass to espy some of her deformities in, and cannot so much as mention that ordinary name of sin or sinner, without an extraordinary affection, and unrequired accusation of itself, "Of all sinners," &c. The plain reason of this effect in the tender heart is, first, because it is tender. The soft and accurate parts of a man's body do suffer without reaction, i. e. do yield at the appearance of an enemy, and not any way put forward to repel him. These being fixed on by a bee, or the like, are easily penetrated by the sting, and are so far from resisting of it, that they do in a manner draw it to them, and by their free reception allure it to enter so far, that the owner can seldom ever recover it back again. Whereas on a dead carcass, a thick or callous member of the body, a bee may fix and not forfeit her sting. So doth a tender heart never resist or defend itself against a stroke, but attenuates itself, lays wide open its pores, to facilitate its entrance, seems to woo a threatening, to prick, and sting, and wound it sharply, as if it rejoiced in, and did even court those torments which the sense of sin or judgment thus produced.

Again, a tender heart ordinarily meets with more blows, more oppressions than any other: its very passiveness provokes every one's malice; the fly and dust, as if it were by a kind of natural instinct, drive directly at the eye, and no member about you shall be oftener rubbed or disordered than that which is raw or distempered; the reason being, because that which is not worthy notice to another part is an affliction to this, and a mote which the hand observes not, will torment the eye. So is it with the conscience, whose tenderness doth tempt every piece of Scripture to afflict it, and is more encumbered with the least atom of sin or threat, than the more hardened sinner is with a beam or mountain.

Thirdly, one that hath any solemn business to do will not pass by any opportunity of means which may advantage him in it. One that hath a search to make will not slip any evidence which may concur to the helping of his discovery; one that hath any treatise to write will be ready to apply any thing that ever he reads to his theme or purpose. Now the search, the discourse, the whole employment of a tender heart is the enquiry after the multitude of its sins, and in sum, the aggravation of each particular guilt, in and against

itself, that so having sufficiently loaded itself, and being tired with the weight and burden of its sins, it may in some measure perform the condition which Christ requires of them which come to Him, and be prepared to receive that ease
Mat. xi. 26. which Christ hath promised to the "weary and heavy laden." So then if the tender conscience doth never repel, or reverberate any mention of sin, but doth draw out the sting of it to its length, if it be much affected with the least atom of sin, and therefore meets with frequent disorders, if, lastly, it make its employment to gather out of all the Scripture, those places which may advantage her in the sight and sense of her sins; then certainly doth she never hear of the name of sinner, but straight she applies it to herself, which was the point we undertook to shew.

The direct use of this proposition is for a *κρίσις*, or judgment of our estate. It is observed in the body that the rest of the senses may be distempered and lost without impairing of it, but only the touch cannot, which therefore they call the sense of life, because that part or body which is deprived of feeling, is also at death's door, and hath no more life in it, than it hath relics of this sense. So is it also in spiritual matters: of all other symptoms this of senselessness is most dangerous, and as the Greek physicians are wont to say of a desperate disease, *ὀλέθριον κάρτα λίαν*, "very very mortal." This feeling tenderness is necessary to the life of grace, and is an inseparable both effect and argument of it. Wherefore, I say, for the judgment of yourselves, observe how every piece of Scripture works upon you. If you can pass over a catalogue of sins and judgments without any regret, or reluctancy, if you can read Sodom and Gomorrah, Babylon and the harlot Jerusalem, and not be affected with their stories, if thou canst be the auditor of other men's faults without any sense or griping of thine own, if the name of sin or sinner be unto thee but as a jest or fable, not worthy thy serious notice, then fear thy affections' want of that temper, which the softening Spirit is wont to bestow where it rests, and accordingly as thou findest this tenderness increasing or waning in thee, either give thanks or pray: either give thanks for the plenty of that Spirit which thou enjoyest, or in the sense of thy wants importune it, that God will give us

softened relenting hearts, that the recital of other men's sins may move us, other men's judgments may strike us, other men's repentance melt us with a sense, with a confession, with a contrition of our own. But above all, O Holy Spirit, from hardness of heart, from an undiscerning, reprobate spirit, from a contempt, nay neglect, a not observing of Thy Word, as from the danger of hell, Good Lord deliver us.

And thus much of this point, of this effect of a tender heart, noted to you out of the cadence of the words. I now come to observe somewhat more real out of the main of the words themselves, "Of whom," &c. We find not our Apostle here complimenting with himself, either excusing or attenuating his guilt, but as it were glorying in the measure of his sins, striving for pre-eminence above all other sinners, challenging it as his right, and as eager upon the preferment, as his fellow-labourer Peter's successor for a primacy (as he professes) of all bishops, yea the whole Church; so our Apostle here, "Of all sinners I am the chief." The note briefly is this, that every one is to aggravate the measure and number of his sins against himself, and as near as he can observe how his guilt exceedeth other men's. This was St. Paul's practice and our pattern, not to be gazed on, but followed, not to be discussed, but imitated. In the discourse whereof I shall not labour to prove you the necessity of this practice, which yet I might do out of David's example in his penitential psalms, [Ps. li.; Nehem. ix.] especially the fifty-first, out of Nehemiah's confession, and the like, but taking this as supposed, I shall rather mix doctrine, and reason, and use altogether, in prescribing some forms of aggravating ourselves to ourselves, yet not descending to a particular dissection of sin into all its parts, but dealing only on general heads, equally applicable to all men, briefly reducible to these two, 1. original sin, or the sin of our nature, of which we are all equally guilty; 2. personal sin, grounded in and terminated to each man's person.

For original sin, it is the fathers' complaint, and ought more justly to be ours of these times, that there is no reckoning made of it, it is seldom thought worthy to supply a serious place in our humiliation, it is mentioned only for fashion's sake, and as it were to stop God's mouth, and to give Him satisfaction, or palliate the guilt

of our wilful rebellions, not on any real apprehension that its cure and remedy in baptism is a considerable benefit, or the remnant weakness (after the killing venom is abated) were more than a trivial disadvantage. So that we have a kind of need of original clearness of understanding, to judge of the foulness of original sin, and we cannot sufficiently conceive our loss, without some recovery of those very faculties we forfeited in it. But that we may not be wilfully blind in a matter that so imports us, that we may understand somewhat of the nature and dangerous condition of this sin, you must conceive Adam, who committed this first sin, in a double respect, either as one particular man, or as containing in his loins the whole nature of man, all mankind, which should ever come from him. Adam's particular sin, i. e. his personal disobedience is wonderfully aggravated from the fathers[b], 1. from his original justice, which God had bestowed on him; 2. from the near familiarity with God, which he enjoyed and then lost; 3. from the perpetual blessed estate, which, had it not been for this disobedience, he might for ever have lived in; 4. from the purity and integrity of his will, which was then void of all sinful desire, which otherwise might have tempted to this disobedience; 5. from the easiness of both remembering and observing the commandment, it being a short prohibition, and only to abstain from one tree, where there was such plenty besides; 6. from the nature and circumstances of the offence, by which the fathers[d] do refer it to all manner of heinous sins, making it to contain a breach of almost each moral law, all which were then written in the tables of his heart, and therefore concluding it to be an aggregate or mixture of all those sins which we have since so reiterated, and so many times sinned over. So then this personal sin of Adam was of no mean size, not to be reckoned of as an every day's offence, as an ordinary breach, or the mere eating of an apple. In the next place, as Adam was no private person, but the whole human nature, so this sin is to be considered either in the root, or in the fruit, in itself, or in its effects. In itself; so all mankind, and every particular man is, and in that name must humble himself as concerned in the eating

[b] S. August. De Civit. Dei, xxi. 12. [c] Ibid., lib. xiv. c. 12.
[d] S. Leo Magn., p. 143. [See above, p. 289.]

of that fruit, which only Adam's teeth did fasten on; is to deem himself bound to be humbled for that pride, that curiosity, that disobedience, or whatsoever sin else can be contained in that first great transgression; and count you this nothing, to have a share in such a sin which contains such a multitude of rebellions? It is not a slight, perfunctory humiliation that can expiate, not a small labour that can destroy this monster which is so rich in heads, each to be cut off by the work of a several repentance. Now in the last place, as this sin of all mankind in Adam is considered in its effects, so it becomes to us a "body of sin and death," a natural disorder of the whole man, an hostility and enmity of the flesh against the spirit, and the parent of all sin in us, as may appear, Rom. vii. and Jam. i. 14. Which that you may have a more complete understanding of, consider it as it is ordinarily set down, consisting of three parts, 1. a natural defect, 2. a moral affection, 3. a legal guilt; i. e. a guiltiness of the breach of the law, for these three (whatsoever you may think of them) are all parts of that sin of our nature, which is in, and is to be imputed to us, called ordinarily original sin in us, to distinguish it from that first act committed by Adam, of which this is an effect. And first, that natural defect is a total loss and privation of that primitive justice, holiness and obedience, which God had furnished the creature withal; a disorder of all the powers of the soul, a darkness of the understanding, a perverseness of the will, a debility, weakness, and decay of all the senses, and in sum, a poverty and destruction, and almost a nothingness of all the powers of soul and body. And how ought we to lament this loss with all the veins of our heart! to labour for some new strain of expressing our sorrow, and in fine to petition that rich grace, which may build up all these ruins; to pray to God that His Christ may purchase and bestow on us new abilities, that the second Adam may furnish us with more durable powers and lasting graces than we had, but forfeited in the first! The following part of this sin of our nature, viz., a moral evil affection, is word for word mentioned Rom. vii. 5; for there [Rom. vii. 5.] the Greek words *παθήματα ἁμαρτιῶν*, ordinarily translated "motions of sins," and in the margin 'the passions of sins," are more significantly to be rendered "affections of sins," i. e. by

an usual figure, sinful affections. That you may the better observe the encumbrances of this branch of this sin, which doth so overshadow the whole man, and so fence him from the beams and light of the spiritual invisible Sun, I am to tell you that the very heathen that lived without the knowledge of God, had no conversation with, and so no instruction from the Bible in this matter; that these very heathens, I say, had a sense of this part of original sin, to wit, of these evil moral lusts and affections, which they felt in themselves, though they knew not whence they sprang. Hence it is that a Greek philosopher[e] out of the ancients makes a large discourse of the unsatiable desire and lust which is in every man, and renders his life grievous unto him, where he useth the very same word, though with a significant epithet added to it, that St. James doth, ch. i. ver. 14. *ἀπέραντος ἐπιθυμία*, "infinite lust," with which, as St. James saith, "a man is drawn away and enticed," *ἐξελκόμενος καὶ δελεαζόμενος*, so, saith he, that part of the mind in which these lusts dwell, is persuaded and drawn, or rather falls backward and forward, *ἄνω καὶ κάτω μεταπίπτει καὶ ἀναπείθεται*, which lust or evil concupiscence he at last defines to be[f], *ἀκολασία τῷ τετριμμένῳ πίθῳ διὰ τὴν ἀπληστίαν ἀπεικασμένη*, "an unsatiable intemperance of the appetite, never filled with a desire," never ceasing in the prosecution of evil; and again he calls it, *περιπεφυκυίαν ἡμῖν ἔξωθεν γένεσιν*[g], "our birth and nativity derived to us by our parents," i. e. an evil affection hereditary to us, and delivered to us as a legacy at our birth and nativity: all which seems a clear expression of that original lust, whose motions they felt, and guessed at its nature. Hence is it, that it was a custom among all of them, I mean the common heathen, to use many ways of purgations, especially on their children, who at the imposition of their names were to be lustrated and purified, with a great deal of superstition and ceremony, such like as they used to drive away a plague, or a cure for an house or city. As if nature by instinct had taught them so much religion, as to acknowledge and desire to cure in every one this hereditary disease of the soul, this "plague of man's heart," as it is called 1 Kings viii. 38. And

James i. 14.

[e] Jamblichus, Protrept., c. xvii. p. 101. [f] Ibid., p. 102.
[g] [Id. Explan. Symb., iii.] p. 136.

in sum, the whole learning of the wisest of them, (such were the moralists,) was directed to the governing and keeping in order of these evil affections, which they called the unruly citizens[h] and common people of the soul, whose intemperance and disorders they plainly observed within themselves, and laboured hard to purge out, or subdue to the government of reason and virtue, which two we more fully enjoy, and more christianly call the power of grace, redeeming our souls from this body of sin. Thus have I briefly shewed you the sense that the very heathen had of this second branch of original sin, which needs therefore no farther aggravation to you but this, that they who had neither Spirit nor Scripture to instruct them, did naturally so feelingly observe and curse it, that by reason of it they esteemed their whole life but a living death[i], τίς οἶδεν εἰ τὸ ζῆν μέν ἐστι καθανεῖν, τὸ καθανεῖν δὲ ζῆν; and their body but the sepulchre of the soul, τὸ σῶμα ἐστὶν ἡμῶν σῆμα, καὶ γὰρ ἡμεῖς τῷ ὄντι τέθναμεν, both which together are but a periphrasis of that which St. Paul calls in brief the "body of death." And shall we who [Rom. vii. 24.] have obtained plenty of light and instruction, besides that which nature bestowed on us with them, shall we, I say, let our eyes be confounded with abundance of day? shall we see it more clearly to take less notice of it? shall we feel the stings of sin within us, (which though they do but prick the regenerate, prove mortal to the rest of us,) and shall we not observe them? Shall we not rather weep those fountains dry, and crop this luxury of our affections with a severe sharp sorrow and humiliation? Shall we not starve this rank, fruitful mother of vipers, by denying it all nourishment from without, all advantages of temptations and the like, which it is wont to make use of to beget in us all manner of sin: let us aggravate every circumstance and inconvenience of it to ourselves, and then endeavour to banish it out of us, and when we find we are not able, importune that strong assistant the Holy Spirit to curb and subdue it, that in the necessity of residing, it yet may not reign in our mortal bodies; to tame and abate the power of this necessary Amorite, and free us from the activity, and mischief and temptations of it here, and from the punishment and imputation of it hereafter.

[h] Maximus Tyrius, [supr. p. 278.] [i] Euripides, Polyidus, frag. 7. ed. Dind.

And so I come to the third part or branch of this original sin, to wit, its legal guilt, and this we do contract by such an early prepossession, that it outruns all other computations of our life. We carry a body of sin about us, before we have one of flesh, have a decrepit, weak old man, with all his crazy train of affections and lusts, before even infancy begins. "Be-
Ps. li. 5. hold," saith the Psalmist, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me:" as if guilt were the plastic power that formed us, and wickedness the minera and element of our being, as if it were that little moving point which the curious enquirers into nature find to be the rudiment of animation, and pants not then for life, but lust, and endless
James i. 15. death. So that the saying of St. James, chap. i. 15, seems a description of our natural birth, "when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Nor does this hasty inmate leave us when grown up: no, it improves its rancour against God and goodness, mixes with custom, passion, and example, and whatever thing is apt to lead us unto mischief, fomenting all the wild desires of our inferior brutal part, till it become at last an equal and professed enemy, making open hostility, setting up its sconces, fortifying itself with munition and defence, as meaning to try the quarrel with God, and pretending right to man, whom God doth but usurp. Thus shall you see it encamped, and
[Ps. lxxiv. 4.] setting up its "banners for tokens," under that proud name
[Rom. vii. 23.] of another law. "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind," and as if it had got the better of the day, "bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in the members," i. e. unto itself. And shall we feel such an enemy within us, laying siege at God and grace in us, and fiercely resolving, whether by deceit or battery to captivate us unto himself, and shall we not take notice of him? Shall we not think it worthy our pains and expense to defeat him, or secure ourselves? Beloved, that will be the best stratagem for the taking of this enemy, which is now-a-days most ordinary in sieges, to block up all passages, and hinder all access of fresh provision, and so by denying this greedy devourer all nourishment from without, to starve and pine him into such a tameness, that he may be taken without resistance; which how really you may perform by these means

of mortification and repentance prescribed you in Scripture, you shall better learn by your own practice than my discourse.

The fourth aggravation of this guilt is, that its minera and fuel lurks even in a regenerate man, wretched, &c., and enforceth Paul into a conflict, a war against himself. And is it possible for one otherwise happy, (as the regenerate man inwardly surely is,) to sleep securely, and never to try a field with the author of its so much misery, or finding it to be within itself part of itself, not to think it a sin worthy repentance, and sorrow, by which God's Holy Spirit is so resisted, so affronted, and almost quelled and cast out? 1 Cor. ix. 27.

Fifthly, and lastly, the guilt of it appears by the effects of it, 1. inclination, 2. consent to evil: for even every inclination to sin without consent is an irregularity and kind of sin, i. e. an aversion of some of our faculties from God; all which should directly drive amain to Him and goodness. That servant which is commanded with all speed and earnestness to go about any thing, offends against his master's precept if he any way incline to disobedience, if he perform his commands with any regret or reluctancy. Now secondly, consent is so natural a consequent of this evil inclination, that in a man you can scarce discern, much less sever them. No man hath any inordinate lust, but doth give some kind of consent to it, the whole will being so infected with this lust, that that can no sooner bring forth evil motions, but this will be ready at hand with evil desires: and then how evident a guilt, how plain a breach of the law it is you need not mine eyes to teach you. Thus have I insisted somewhat largely on the branches of original sin, which I have spread and stretched the wider, that I might furnish you with more variety of aggravations on each member of it, which I think may be of important use, for this or any other popular auditory, because this sin ordinarily is so little thought of, even in our solemnest humiliations. When you profess that you are about the business of repentance, you cannot be persuaded that this common sin which Adam, as you reckon, only sinned, hath any effect on you. I am yet afraid that you still hardly believe that you are truly, and in earnest to be sorry for it, unless the Lord strike our hearts with an exact sense, and professed feeling of this sin of our nature, and corruption of our kind.

And suffer us not, O Lord, to nourish in ourselves such a torpor, sluggishness and security, lest it drive us headlong to all manner of hard-heartedness to commit actual sins, and that even with greediness.

[Eph. iv. 19.]

And so I come briefly to a view of each man's personal sins, "I am the chief:" where I might rank all manner of sins into some forms or seats, and then urge the deformity of each of them single and naked to your view, but I will for the present presume your understandings sufficiently instructed in the heinousness of each sin forbidden by the commandments. For others who will make more or less sins than the Scripture doth, I come not to satisfy them, or decide their cases of conscience. In brief I will propose to your practice only two forms of confessing your sins, and humbling yourselves for them, which I desire you to aggravate to yourselves, because I have not now the leisure to beat them low, or deep to your consciences. Besides original sin already spoken of, you are to lay hard to your own charges, 1. your particular chief sins, 2. all your ordinary sins in gross. For the first, observe but that one admirable place in Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple. "If there be in the land famine," &c. "Whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness, what prayer or supplication soever be made by any man, or by all Thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hand to this house, then hear Thou in heaven," &c. Where the condition of obtaining their requests from God is excellently set down, "if they shall know," i. e. be sensible of, be sorry for, and confess to God every man the "plague of his own heart," that is, in the bulk and heap of their sins, shall pick the fairest loveliest sin in the pack, the plague, i. e. the pestilential, reigning, sweeping offence, on which all the lower train of petty faults do wait and depend, do minister and suppeditate matter to work. If, I say, they shall take this captain sin, and anatomize, and cut up, and discover every branch of him without any fraud or concealment before the Lord, and then sacrifice that dear darling, and with it their whole fleshly lust as an holocaust, or whole burnt-offering before the Lord: then will He "hear from heaven His dwelling-place, and when He heareth, forgive,"

1 K'ngs viii. 37, &c.

even their other concealed sins, because they have disclosed so entirely, and parted so freely from that. For there is in every of us one master sin that rules the rabble, one fatling which is fed with the choicest of our provision, one captain of the devil's troop, one "the plague" in every man's heart. This being sincerely confessed and displayed, and washed in a full stream of tears, for the lower more ordinary sort, for the heap or bulk, we must use David's penitential compendious art, who overcome with the multitude of his sins to be repeated, folds them all in this prayer, "Who can tell how oft he offendeth?" &c. "And do Thou, O Lord, work in us the sincere acknowledgment of, and contrition for both them, and the whole bundle of our unknown every day's transgressions, and having purged out of us those more forward, known, notorious enormities, cleanse us also from our secret faults." And thus much be spoken of this proposition, that, and how every man is to aggravate the measure and number of his sins against himself. The whole doctrine is, and in our whole discourse hath been handled for a store of uses; for in setting down how you are to aggravate your sins, especially your original sin against yourselves, I have spoken all the while to your affections, and will therefore presume that you have already laid them up in your hearts to that purpose. Only take one pertinent use for a close, which hath not been touched in the former discourse. If every one be to aggravate his own sins, and to reckon himself "of all sinners the chief;" then must no man usurp the privilege to see or censure other men's sins through a multiplying glass, i. e. double to what indeed they are, as most men do now-a-days. What so frequent among those who are most negligent of their own ways, as to be most severe inquisitors of other men's? and to spy, and censure, and damn a mote or atom in another man's eye, when their own is in danger to be put out by a beam? Hence is it that among laymen the sins of clergy are weighed according to the measure of the sanctuary, which was provided for the paying of their tithes[k], i. e. double the ordinary balance; and their own, if not under, at most according to the common weight of the congregation. In a minister every error shall become an heresy,

Ps. xix. 12.

Lev. xxvii. 25.

[k] Hooker, p. 428. [Book v. ch. 79. § 10. ed. Keble.]

every slip a crime, and every crime a sacrilege, whereas, beloved, he that means to take out St. Paul's lesson, must extenuate every man's sins but his own, or else his heart will give his tongue the lie, when it hears him say, "Of all," &c.

And so much of this doctrine of aggravating our sins to ourselves, which we are to perform in our daily audit betwixt us and our own consciences. There is another seasonable observation behind in a word to be handled; this particle ὧν, "of whom," hath a double relation, either to sinners simply, and so it hath been handled already, or to sinners as they are here set down, to wit, those sinners which Christ came into the world to save: and so St. Paul here is changed from the chief of sinners to the chief of saints, and then the doctrine is become a doctrine of comfort fit for a conclusion, that he who can follow Paul's example and precept, can sufficiently humble himself for his sins, accept that faithful saying, and rightly lay hold on Christ, may assure himself that he is become a chief saint, for so could Paul say, "Of all sinners I am the chief," and therefore of all those sinners that Christ came into the world to save, πρῶτος εἰμὶ, "I am the chief too." I shall not discuss this point at large, as being too wide to be comprehended in so poor a pittance of time, but shew the condition of it briefly. He that by God's inward effectual working is come to a clear sight and accurate feeling of his sins; that hath not spared any one minute [of] circumstance for the discovery of them, not one point of aggravation for the humbling of himself, he that being thus prepared for his journey to Christ with his burden on his back, shall then take his flight and keep upon the wing, till he fix firmly on Him, may be as sure that he shall die the death, and reign the life of a saint, as he is resolved that God is faithful in His promises: then may he live with this syllogism of confidence, not presumption, in his mouth, "it is a faithful saying that Christ came into the world" to justify, sanctify, and "save believing humble sinners;" but I find myself an humble and believing, and consequently, a justified, sanctified sinner, therefore it is as certain a truth, that I shall be saved. And thus you see Paul's, "I am the chief," interpreted by that assured persuasion, "that neither death nor life, nor any creature shall be able to separate him,"

[Rom. viii. 38.]

&c. I will not discuss the nature of this assurance, whether it be an act of faith or hope, only thus much, it seems to be derived or bestowed upon hope by faith, an expectation of the performances of the promises grounded upon a firm faith in them, and so to be either an eminent degree of faith, or a confirmed hope. The use of this point is, not to be content with this bare assurance, but to labour to confirm it to us by those effects which do ordinarily and naturally spring from it. Such are, first, joy, or glorying, mentioned Heb. iii. 6; the confidence and "rejoicing of your hope firm unto the end:" secondly, a delight in God, mentioned 1 Pet. i. 3, 6; "a lively hope," &c., wherein *ἀγαλλιᾶσθε*, "you exult," you greatly rejoice and are delighted: thirdly, a patient adhering to God in a firm expectation of this state, even in the midst of all manner of worldly evils, mentioned Isaiah viii. 17; "I will wait upon the Lord which hideth His face, and I will look for Him," i. e., I will wait His leisure patiently, for I am sure He will uncover His face. And Job more plainly and vehemently, "Though He kill me, yet will I trust in Him." So *verbatim*, Rom. viii. 25, then "do we in patience wait for it," and 2 Thess. iii. 5, "the patient waiting for Christ." Fourthly, as an effect of this patience, a silence and acquiescence "in the will of God," without any desire of hastening or altering any effect of it. So Psalm xxxvii. 7; "Rest in the Lord," where the Hebrew hath it, be silent to the Lord, "and wait patiently for Him," i. e. as the consequence interprets it, quarrel not with God for any thing that happens according to His will, but against thine, as the prosperity of the wicked, and the like. Fifthly, a confirmation of the mind, as making our hope "the anchor of our soul, sure and stedfast," that we may thereby in "patience possess our souls." And lastly, a desire of sanctifying ourselves, according to that 1 John iii. 3; "Every man that hath this hope in him purifies himself, even as Christ is pure." These six effects briefly set down, may be certain marks to you, by which you may judge how just grounds your assurance stands on, and whereby it is to be distinguished from presumption. O Lord, let the fulness of Thy Holy Spirit overshadow us, and increase our weaker faith into a richer measure of assurance, and our more fearful hopes into a degree of full persuasion and certain expec-

Heb. iii. 6.
1 Pet. i. 3, 6.
Isa. viii. 17.
[Job xiii. 15.]
Rom. viii. 25.
2 Thess. iii. 5.
Ps. xxxvii. 7. דום
Heb. vi. 17.
Luke xxi. 19.
1 John iii. 3.

tation of those visions that Thou shalt reveal, and that blest estate that Thou shalt bestow upon us; and lest our confidence may either be or seem but a presumption, work in us those effects of patience, of silence, of joy, of delight, of confirmation of mind, and above all a desire and ability of sanctifying our lives unto Thee.

Thus have I with all possible haste made an end of these words, and at this time out of the cadence of them observed to you the tenderness of St. Paul and every regenerate man, at the least mention of a sin or sinner, illustrated by the opposite hardness of heart, proved of soft tender parts of our body, and made use of for a crisis or judgment of our estate and livelihood in grace. Secondly, out of the words themselves we observed the necessity and method of aggravating our sins, especially original sin, against ourselves, which we made use of against those that are more quick-sighted in other men's estates and guilts than their own. Thirdly, we closed all with that comfortable doctrine of assurance, discussed to you in brief with six effects of it proposed for an example to your care and imitation.

Now the God which hath created us, redeemed, called, justified us, will sanctify in His time, will prosper this His ordinance to that end, will direct us by His grace to His glory. To Him be ascribed due the honour, the praise, the glory, the dominion, which through all ages of the world have been given to Him that sitteth on the throne, to the Holy Spirit, and to the Lamb for evermore.

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